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KING PETER

THE GUARDIANS OF THE GATE

HISTORICAL LECTURES ON THE SERBS

BY

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WITH A FOREWORD

BY

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C.B., C.M.G.

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FOREWORD

The Serbians are a people but little known in Great Britain. This extremely interesting book by the Rev. R. G. D. Laffan, C.F. will, I am confident, help our nation to understand them better, and, in understanding, to appreciate the sterling qualities that underlie their national character.

I have lived among the Serbians during the past three years, in days, and under circumstances, which encourage the revelation of every human attribute : in the days immediately following their first success, when they triumphantly flung out of Serbia the ' Punitive expedition ' of their powerful neighbour and relentless enemy : in long and weary days of tenacious defence : in the days of overwhelming and treacherous attack upon them, with hope of succour growing less and less : in days of terrible marches in a fighting retreat through their beloved country under moral and physical conditions surely never paralleled in the history of any nation : in the days of regeneration of all that was left of them : and finally in days of eager and reckless fighting to regain that which they had lost. The qualities which they have displayed throughout these fateful years should especially appeal to the inhabitants of our Empire.

A love of freedom and country as deeply implanted as our own. A loyalty to friends that does not falter under the greatest temptation, and a chivalry so innate that hundreds

of our countrywomen could walk hundreds of miles through a great army in a harassed retreat, through a fleeing peasantry in a disorganized and strange land, and yet fear no evil.

From such experiences a judgement can be formed; I permit myself, with the Serbians, to believe in a Serbia great and flourishing in the future, pursuing her national development and ideals in peace and quietness, bound to Great Britain in the closest ties of friendship, and once more—as for centuries past—holding the gate of freedom of life, of freedom of thought, against the sinister forces of moral enslavement.

Serbia has indeed well and bravely answered the great question He asked: 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'

E. T. T.

PREFACE

To pass away the winter evenings in the early months of 1917 I gave a series of lectures on modern Serbian history to the scattered companies of the A.S.C. (M.T.), who are attached to the Serbian Army. Many of the men of the companies showed great interest in the subject, and, as we approached the end of the course, a number of them asked me to publish the lectures. So I have written the following chapters from the lecture-notes, intending them primarily as a souvenir for those who are now with the Serbs, but also in the hope that they may serve to spread sympathy for our heroic but little-known allies.

The title, 'the Guardians of the Gate', is borrowed from a phrase applied to the Serbs by several speakers, in particular by Mr. Lloyd George in his speech on August 8. It is a summary of the services which the Serbs have always done their best to render to Christendom: for their country is, indeed, one of the gateways of civilized Europe. Despite their unhappy divisions and their weakness in numbers they have never ceased to struggle against the barbarisms of Turkestan and Berlin, which at different times have threatened to overflow the Western nations and the Mediterranean lands.

The lectures did not attempt a detailed survey of even recent years, and their publication may seem superfluous in view of the number of books lately produced on Balkan

topics. Yet attention in England has been so largely and naturally directed to the west of Europe and to Russia that it is still possible to encounter the most complete ignorance of the Eastern Question. There are many who have a working knowledge of the great nations of Europe who still could scarcely distinguish between a Sandjak and a Dardanelle, or say off-hand whether the Balkan peoples were Christians or worshippers of Mumbo Jumbo. And the history of south-eastern Europe in the present century is so obscure in its details that there is much excuse for those who could not be bothered to understand it. Yet the vital interests of the British Empire are so bound up with the Near East that every effort should be made to present British readers with facts on which an opinion may be based. Not that it is yet possible to write the history of such recent years or of so complicated a subject with the scientific and impartial accuracy of the true historian. For that we must wait until the dust of conflict has cleared and the passions of the moment have subsided. Meanwhile, these lectures are offered as a provisional and tentative examination of the triumphs, disasters, and ambitions of the Serbs.

The chief difficulty in the way of gathering historical material during a campaign in the uplands of Macedonia consists in the lack of books. Especially has this been true of books giving the views of our enemies. However, I have read everything upon which I could lay my hands, and the lack of printed matter has been perhaps, to some extent, balanced by the advantage of meeting with and questioning numerous Serbian officers and others who know the Balkans well.

As regards spelling, in a work for students it would be necessary to use the 'Latinitza'. But for non-expert readers experience here seems to show that the Croatian alphabet with its accented consonants is only a degree less difficult than the Serbian letters themselves. So I have transliterated Southern Slav names and quotations from the Serbian into the corresponding English sounds. The following very simple rules will be easily remembered.

a	pronounced as the	*a*	in	father.
e	,,	*a*	,,	ate.
i	,,	*ee*	,,	meet.
u	,,	*oo*	,,	moon.
zh	,,	*z*	,,	azure.

In all the Southern Slav territories I have used the Slavonic place-names, with the exception of a few very familiar names such as Belgrade, Monastir, Scutari, and the Danube. When referring to Southern Slav authors, whose books are quoted, I have thought it best to leave their names as they appear on the title-pages of the books in question.

I wish to take this opportunity of imitating many generations of Oxford men in expressing my gratitude for the unfailing sympathy and help of which Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher, of Magdalen, is so prodigal; and in particular for his kindness on this occasion in undertaking to see my MS. through the press.

It is also my pleasant duty to thank Privates Tillett and Thomson for drafting the maps; as also Corporals Taylor and Hughes, and Privates Biggs, Lorenzelli, and Dixon for typing the MS. in triplicate, a precaution rendered necessary by the enemy's submarines. Also, lastly, Lt.-Col. W. L.

Sorel, D.S.O., and the Officers commanding the companies, and Lt.-Col. A. E. Kidd, R.A.M.C., commanding Stationary Hospital, who gave me every facility for delivering the lectures.

R. G. D. LAFFAN.

HEAD-QUARTERS,
M.T. UNITS WITH ROYAL SERBIAN ARMY,
BRITISH SALONIKA FORCE.
September 19, 1917.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE LECTURES

AS DELIVERED

"When we arrived at Salonika last summer, most of us were entirely ignorant of the Balkan peninsula. Since then we have lived and worked in Macedonia, and I believe that you have formed no very high opinion of the country; which is not surprising when we remember that it has been the most troubled and insecure part of the Balkans for the last forty years. We are still more than vague about the inhabitants, the states, the economic condition and the history of the peninsula. But one thing we have all learned. We have been in close touch with the Serbian soldier, and we admire and love him. He has been a revelation to us of the charm of a people very unlike ourselves.

In the past most Englishmen, who have spoken to me about the Balkans, have expressed very decided views. Nine out of ten have said that all the Balkan nations were as bad as each other; that, as between Turks and Christians, it was six of one and half-a-dozen of the other; that all were savages and cut-throats and past praying for. The tenth man has usually been a philanthropic crank, who would only see good points in his own pet Balkan nation, and who wished to make it by industrialization and party politics into an imitation of Great Britain.

Now, when we return to England, we shall, at any rate, be in a position to declare that we found one Balkan race, the Serbs, to consist of the best of fellows. Our companies have had Serbs attached to them, as guards or drivers, and very sorry we were when they were withdrawn. Though most of us could not say anything to them except 'Dobro' (good), we managed to understand them, and to make ourselves understood. They were always cheerful, kindly, helpful, with a skill in many handicrafts that made camp-life more comfortable for themselves and us. And I think we may flatter ourselves that they liked us and our ways, and found the British character sympathetic with their own.

But, though first-hand acquaintance with some Serbs is essential to any knowledge of the people, I believe that you would like also to understand something of the nation's past and of the mental background from which the Serbs view the world. It is for that reason that I have undertaken to deliver these lectures. They will deal with the history of the Serbs in recent times; because it is impossible to understand the characteristics and point of view of a people, especially a people so nationalist and traditionalist as the Serbs, apart from their history.

On the other hand, I do not propose to go into the mediaeval glories of the Serbian emperors, the self-sacrificing educational work of St. Sava, the conquests of Stephen Dushan, or the exploits of Kralyevitch Marko and other heroes of the race. It would take too long, and I do not think it would greatly interest you. But it will be necessary throughout to remember that the Serbs look back with pride to the great days of their independence in the Middle Ages, and to their empire which once embraced the whole Balkan peninsula, except southern Greece and the coast-towns.

They were a great people six hundred years ago. Never have they been more glorious than in their present humiliation, exile, and disruption. But, please God, that spiritual glory which encircles them to-day will soon be expressed in the 'outward and visible signs' of material greatness, and they will again take their place among the mighty nations of the earth."

AUSTRIA - HUNGARY
ROUMANIA
SERBIA
BULGARIA
TURKEY
BOSNIA
HERTZEGOVINA
MONTENEGRO
ALBANIA
MACEDONIA
THRACE
E. ROUMELIA
SLAVONIA
CROATIA
DALMATIA
BANAT
BATCHKA
SYRMIA
SANDJAK
ADRIATIC SEA
ITALY
BLACK SEA
AEGEAN SEA
SEA OF MARMORA
Trieste
Zagreb
Riyeka
Novi Sad
Karlovtzi
Belgrade
Bucharest
R. Danube
R. Save
R. Bosna
R. Drina
R. Morava
R. Timok
R. Vardar
R. Maritza
Lussin
Yaytze
Zadar
Sarajevo
Lissa
Dubrovnik
Cattaro
Tsetinye
Scutari
Petch
Novi Pazar
Nish
Sofia
Vranya
Kumanova
Skoplye
Prilep
Monastir
Ochrida
Florina
Vodena
Salonika
Seres
Kavalla
Adrianople
Constantinople
St Stefano
Brindisi
Gulf of Taranto
Corfu
Yannina
Imbros
Mt Athos
Limnos
Dardanelles
Rhodope Mts
Balkan Mts
Rudnik Mts
Kragujevatz
Smederevo
Zuruts
Mitrovitza
Ushka Mts
THE BALKANS in 1900
Miles
0 20 40 60 80 100 120
Frontiers

I

The Past

Iz mrachnoga sinu groba
Srpske krune novi siai.
'Out of the darkness of the tomb
Shines the new lustre of the Serbian crown.'
Serbian National Anthem.

It is best to begin with geography. Several permanent elements in Serbian history become apparent as soon as we study the map. The first point that strikes us is the mountainous nature of the country, only relieved by a few plains, as in the Matchva to the north-west, the plain of Kossovo, the valley of the Morava, or the Monastir plain. The whole trend of the country north of Skoplye (Uskub) is a well-wooded and irregular slope down towards the Danube and the Save, into which flow the rivers of Serbia, familiar to the M.T. companies from the names of the military divisions—the Timok, the Drina, and the Morava, with its two branches and its tributary, the Ibar. South of Skoplye the country consists of a tangle of uplands to the west, and the Vardar valley to the east, leading down towards the great Greek harbour of Salonika.

There are three distinguishable parts of Serbia, to which I shall refer under the following names—'Serbia proper', 'Old Serbia', and 'Serbian Macedonia'. By 'Serbia proper' I mean the roughly triangular little State which we knew as Serbia before 1912, bounded on the north by the Danube, on the east by the Timok and the Balkan Mountains, and on the west and south by the Drina and the old Turkish frontier running north of Mitrovitza and south

of Vranya. By 'Old Serbia' I mean the central belt round Skoplye, Kumanovo, and the Kossovo plain, including the old Sandjak of Novi Pazar, which ran up to the Bosnian frontier. Here are the towns and sacred places of mediaeval Serbia; Skoplye, where Stephen Dushan was crowned emperor; Petch (Ipek),[1] the ancient see of the Serbian patriarchs; Detchani, the famous monastery and home of Serbian traditions; Kossovo, where the Serbian power went down before the Turks. By 'Serbian Macedonia' I mean the middle Vardar valley below Veles and the hilly country which lies between that and the lake of Ohrida.

Three further general remarks about the geography of Serbia ought to be made at this point. First, the great importance of the position which the country occupies. The Balkan peninsula consists largely of barren uplands and mountain ranges producing little in the way of valuable merchandise. But across it run at least two great trade-routes, from Belgrade to Salonika and from Belgrade to Constantinople, connecting Central Europe with the Aegean Sea and the East. There have been other routes, but to-day the peninsula is traversed by only two main railway lines which follow the two routes I have mentioned. These two corridors open the way through the inhospitable country and connect the rich plains of Hungary with the Levantine world. They are also the lines along which invasion has poured from East to West or from West to East many times in the course of history. And the Balkan peninsula is peculiarly open to invasion. Spain and Italy are shut off and protected from their northern neighbours by great mountain barriers, while on every other side they are washed by the waters of broad seas. The northern frontiers of

[1] Petch was included in Montenegro in 1913.

Bosnia, Serbia, and Bulgaria consist only of rivers, mainly running through low-lying country, while to the south-east the narrow straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles have not constituted a formidable obstacle to an enemy possessed of the Asian shore. The gates of the peninsula, therefore, have not been closed to the hostile foreigner, and the corridors which penetrate it have aroused his cupidity. Foreign Powers, Roman, Frank and Ottoman, Austrian, Russian, and German, have desired and determined to control the overland routes of the Balkan countries.

Now, athwart those lines of communication and commanding the north-western portions of both, lies Serbia. Invading armies moving west from Asia or east from Central Europe must pass over Serbian territory. The little country stands in a position of world importance. She holds a gateway between the mountain walls, and therefore she is in a situation of the utmost danger. Her stormy history, the long centuries of her subjection to foreign rule, and her present disastrous condition show how her more powerful neighbours have coveted the passage-ways which she commands.

Secondly, alone with Switzerland amongst European states, Serbia has no outlet to the sea. Naturally this has been an overwhelming commercial disadvantage, and has terribly handicapped Serbia as compared with Roumania or Bulgaria, not to mention Greece, which is really a maritime state, with a population living on or around the Aegean.

The full effect of this disadvantage was felt by Serbia when she began to develop her natural resources towards the close of the nineteenth century. Apart from Bulgaria and Turkey, neither of whom was rich or civilized, she had

no customer for her exports except Austria-Hungary. Surrounding Serbia from the Carpathians to the Sandjak of Novi Pazar, Austria-Hungary received almost the whole of Serbia's trade and consequently tended to assume the part of dictator to the little state, which she was able to threaten with commercial starvation should her wishes not be docilely obeyed. Serbia in fact was for many years in the Austrian grip.

Thirdly, let us remember throughout that only a part of the Serbian race lives in Serbia. Bosnia and Hertzegovina are Serbian lands. Out of less than 1,900,000 inhabitants, over 1,820,000 are Serbo-Croats.[1] Almost the whole population of the Austrian province of Dalmatia is Serbo-Croat, while the Slovenes of the country round Lyublyana (Laibach), though devotedly Roman Catholic and so divided from the Serbs on religious grounds, are Slavs and use a language closely akin to Serbian. Hungary, too, has its large percentage of the same race. In the Banat, Batchka, and Syrmia is a pure Serbian population, at one with the Serbs in language and religion and numbering over a million. Also in Croatia and Slavonia there are the Croats, Roman Catholic in religion, but using the Serbian language, though written in the Latin or western characters, not in the Cyrillic alphabet of Serbia. Lastly, the little state of Montenegro differs on no test of race, language, or religion from Serbia, and its inhabitants are but an independent and allied portion of the Serbian nation.

Consequently, of recent years when Serbia showed signs of growing strength and vitality, not unnaturally many of her friends expected her to play a great rôle in the future and to be the nucleus round which a state should grow up,

[1] *The New Europe*, No. 21, p. 256, March 8, 1917.

embracing all the Slav peoples of southern Austria-Hungary, as well as the Serbian portions of the old Turkish Empire. There have been many obstacles to the fulfilment of such a hope. Quite apart from the present catastrophe that has overtaken our Serbian friends, the religious difficulty still exists, though similarity of race and speech have drawn Catholics and Orthodox into the common movement. Also the Slavs of the Dual Monarchy in Croatia have felt themselves the superiors of the Serbs in civilization, and have been unready whole-heartedly to seek national salvation at Belgrade. But the tyranny of the Hungarian Government, which has done so much to draw the Southern Slavs together, has nearly succeeded in removing all the moral barriers to what is called Yugoslav solidarity.[1] It was the remarkable growth of pro-Serbian feeling among the Slavs of Austria-Hungary after the Serbian victories in the Balkan wars that roused the Dual Monarchy to its determination to crush Serbia out of existence.

Now let us turn to the history. Serbia was conquered by the Turks about five hundred years ago. Although the Serbs suffered a crushing defeat on the plain of Kossovo in 1389, they cannot be said to have been brought definitely under Turkish rule for the next seventy years. Various leaders maintained the unequal struggle against the invader, and with efficient help from the Christian nations they might have succeeded in stemming the Asiatic flood, but with the fall of Smederevo in 1459, Serbian independence came to an end. The fortress of Belgrade, the last Christian stronghold in the Balkans, fell in 1521, and the task of defending Christendom against the Mohammedan hordes fell to the races of Central Europe.

[1] 'Yug' in Serbian means 'south'.

Then the Serbs sank into a deep sleep of four hundred years. The gross darkness of Turkish rule covered the land. From having been an independent and conquering people they became the working class of a Turkish *pashalik* or province. As against their Moslem lords, who took possession of the land and for whom they laboured, they had few rights and little chance of successful appeal to the distant government of the Sultan.

There has been and is now a tendency in England to regard the Turks as a race of honourable gentlemen, clean fighters, and even, when left to themselves, very tolerable governors. The nations whom they have ruled have thought very differently. They know what it has meant to be defenceless before the Turk, to see their sons carried off to be educated as Moslems and to form the corps of Janizaries, to be unable to protect their daughters from entering the harems of the dominant race or the fruits of their labour from the landlords. It seems as though the Turk had retained the chivalry of caste coloured by Mohammedan contempt for 'infidels'. To his equal in wealth or military prowess the Turk has usually appeared as a gentleman, with the qualities of the gallant fighter, but woe to those whom Allah has made weak and delivered into his hand, should they not submit to all his wishes!

In this long period of extinction two forces were mainly responsible for keeping alive the national spirit of the Serbs. One was their church, part of the Holy Orthodox Church of the East. True to the precepts of Mohammed, the Turks did not force their religion on the peoples whom they conquered. They offered the three-fold choice of Islam, the sword, or tribute. Should a subject-race reject the Mohammedan faith and also not wish to be exterminated,

it was spared on condition of paying tribute. So it came about that, at a time when Western Europe thought it the first duty of a government to impose what it considered the true religion on its subjects, the Sultan of Turkey drew his revenues from subjects who were allowed to abhor the faith of their ruler. Separate nationalities have never been allowed in the Turkish Empire. Religion is for the Turk the mark of distinction between men, and the people who would retain a united social life must find it in ecclesiastical organization. This the Serbs possessed in their national church with its patriarchate of Petch ; and thus it was their church, the one institution left to them, that embodied the traditions, the hopes, and the unity of the people.

The second influence that preserved the national spirit was that of the folk-songs and ballads (*pesme*). In these the lays of the saints and heroes of the glorious past were gathered, and they formed the whole sum of learning and culture to the greater portion of the people. The singing of these mournful and haunting ballads, which may often be heard from the lips of Serb soldiers, was the special business of the blind musicians who accompanied themselves on their one-stringed *gousle*, but every Serb would know several by heart and, his memory not being weakened by the arts of reading and writing, the words would remain indelibly printed on his mind. Thus the *pesme* would be handed on from generation to generation without ever being committed to paper ; and though many have been collected and edited during the last century, there must be many that have never been written. In the long winter evenings, when the Serbian farmers could not work, they would gather round the fire and sing together of past heroes and the golden age. Thus the Serbian soldier of to-day has a rich store of national

history in his songs and knows far more of the tradition, the triumphs, and the struggles of his own people than does his English brother-in-arms. The great figures of English history are to most of our countrymen nothing but names in history books. To the Serbs the old heroes are familiar characters, some of whom, like St. Sava and Kralyevitch Marko, will appear in moments of national crisis to lead their people to victory.

In the hour of disaster and trial, too, these chants are the solace of the long-martyred race. A French doctor, who went through the terrible retreat in 1915, describes how the last act of some Serbian soldiers, before retiring from Kralyevo towards exile and probable death, was to gather round a blind *gousla*-player and to listen once more to the national epic.[1]

Nor are all the *pesme* by any means ancient. The Serbs have sung the story of this war, of their retreat, of Corfu, and of the present campaign. Unsophisticated, primitive folk find it natural to express themselves in poetry. Lieut. Krstitch [2] tells me that during campaigns many of his soldiers used to write home to their wives or parents in song and describe the details of their lives in verse.

Thus, in words composed by a host of nameless bards, the songs of Serbia carry on the nation's story, and every Serb feels himself an actor in a great drama that is beng played out across the centuries. He continues the work of his forefathers. He avenges their sufferings. But he also works for the future. He builds the framework of an age to come. He is a living link in one great chain that stretches

[1] *Labry*, p. 208.

[2] The Serbian *liaison* officer whom Head-quarters M.T. Units are so fortunate as to have with them.

backward far into the past and reaches forward to the generations who shall see Serbia great and free.

To these two influences making for continuity we ought to add a third—the uninterrupted existence of small groups of the Serbian race who never lost their liberty. Perched on the inhospitable crags of the mountains round Tsetinye (Cetinje) and ruled by their bishops of the house of Nyegush, a remnant of the people hurled defiance at the Moslem, till in modern times they formed the principality (recently kingdom) of Montenegro. Meanwhile, in the north, in the wooded hills of Shumadia, though lacking political organization, other mountaineers led the life of outlaws and maintained ceaseless guerrilla warfare against the invader. But it was on the Adriatic coast in the sturdy republic of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) that the tradition of Serbian culture was maintained. Dubrovnik, which succeeded in upholding her independence amid the rivalries of the Turks, the Venetians and the house of Austria, was one of the principal trade-centres of the Levant. Her merchants had their factories along the trade-routes of the Balkans, at Sarajevo, Novi Pazar, Skoplye, Belgrade, Constantinople, and beyond. They brought with them amongst the conquered Serbs the atmosphere of their own free institutions and their wider outlook. But Dubrovnik was even more remarkable for her tradition of literary and scientific achievement. The poets Ivan Gundulitch, Palmotitch and Kaltchitch, the librarian of the Vatican, Stephen Graditch, and the astronomer Boshkovitch, are amongst the names of those who adorned the annals of their city-state, whose independence was only brought to an end by the far-reaching arm of Napoleon.

There were also portions of the Serbian race who, though

not independent, lived under a less barbarous *régime* than that of the Porte. The Serbs of the Dalmatian coast were brought into touch with the West through their Venetian masters; while from the time of Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary, the southern districts of that kingdom were widely colonized by Serbs who had fled before the armies of the Sultan.

At the opening of the seventeenth century the position of the Serbs appeared hopeless. They were but one of many races submerged in the Ottoman Empire. The Turks were by then masters of the whole Balkan peninsula, except the Dalmatian littoral and the remote mountain retreats of the Serbian outlaws. Beyond the Danube they had conquered the whole plain of Hungary and of Roumania. The Black Sea was a Turkish lake and the Moslem hordes again and again threatened Vienna and the centre of Europe. But then began the long Turkish decline. The Turk has been in history a soldier and nothing else. In the Balkans he has been a parasite living on the industry of Slav or Greek peasants. In Constantinople to-day you may see how all the commerce, the enterprise and the art are the monopoly of the Christian races. The Turk is still the governor, the soldier, or the groom, but he is nothing more. And so when the Turks ceased to be a dominant military Power, threatening the most powerful states of Christendom, the decline steadily continued. The trend of aggression ceased to be westward and turned to the East. On the heels of the retreating Turks the rising power of Austria pressed on towards the Levant. The imperial rule was established in Hungary and Croatia, and finally, after 1815, in Dalmatia also. For a short period of twenty-one years (1718–39) northern Serbia also was Austrian. Thus a large portion

of the Serb race came permanently under the government of the Habsburg emperors.

Further, in 1690, after the failure of an Austrian invasion of the Balkans, the Serbian patriarch, Arsen, greatly compromised in the eyes of the Porte by his support of the imperial cause, led an exodus of his people across the Danube into Syrmia, Batchka, and the Banat. The Emperor Leopold granted these immigrants considerable privileges in return for their invaluable services as guardians of the frontier. The patriarch was established at Karlovtzi (Karlowitz) with the same jurisdiction over his co-religionists that he had nominally enjoyed under the Turk, and although the full liberties promised were never put in force, the Serbs of southern Hungary enjoyed a measure of national life.

Thus in the eighteenth century the Serbs found themselves divided between the Austrian and the Turkish imperial systems. Under both governments they were suspect and their aspirations quenched. In 1766 the patriarchate of Petch was abolished by Turkey. In 1778 the *Hofdeputation*, a commission appointed for the defence of Serbian ecclesiastical interests in Hungary, was likewise suppressed by Austria. The Serbs, however, continued to negotiate with Vienna, which was only propitious when there was any frontier fighting to be done or when it seemed necessary to control the Magyars by support of their neighbours. Some of the Serbs, despairing of liberty under the Habsburgs, had begun a further exodus to Russia, whither also an increasing number of young Serbs went for their education.

But the age of revolution was at hand. The nineteenth century opened amid the conflagration that had been lit in France. Underlying the French revolution were the two great ideas, or systems of ideas, that we will call 'The Rights

of Man' and 'Nationality'. These ideas were trumpet-calls that sounded throughout Europe and even awoke an echo in the distant Balkans. But for such an appeal to meet with a response some measure of previous education is necessary. A wholly illiterate and ignorant peasantry cannot be roused by appeals to general principles. Therefore I will stop to say a few words about a Serbian man of letters, whom we will take as the most conspicuous of those who gave themselves at this time to the task of reviving national sentiment and a national literature among their fellow-countrymen.

Dositey Obradovitch was a native of the Banat, and at the age of fifteen entered the monastery of Hopovo in the Frushka Gora. Though a monk he did not feel himself called to the contemplative life. His career is a record of wanderings in search of knowledge, from Smyrna to France and from Russia to Italy. He studied also in Germany and spent six months in London. But, though his mind was open to the literature and ideas of every nation, he was a true Serb in his devotion to the church and to the *pesme*, many of which he collected and published. But he longed also to see the best of western civilization and science introduced among his people, as Peter the Great had done in Russia. Dositey Obradovitch lived to see a great enthusiasm among Serbs for his works. I am told that they used to be sold for their equivalent weight in gold. He first attempted to break from the old Slavonic tradition and to write in the speech of modern life. His appeal reached indirectly beyond his readers to those who could not themselves read. He called to all who spoke the Serbian tongue to remember their common past and to labour together for a future unity. Even in the pashalik of Belgrade he awoke a response. After living in the opening years of the nineteenth century

at Trieste, where a public subscription was raised to relieve him of the perpetual worries of poverty, he was invited by the Serbian leader, Kara-George, to begin the organization of Serbian education. He accordingly settled in Belgrade in 1807 and founded the school out of which has ultimately grown the present university. He refused to leave the country even during the Turkish massacres in 1809, and died in the midst of the struggle for liberation.

The intellectual revival, of which Dositey Obradovitch was at once a symptom and a cause, was naturally more in evidence amongst the Serbs of the Austrian provinces, where material civilization made educational work possible. Secondary schools were founded in 1791 and the seminary of Karlovtzi in 1794. A Slavo-Serbian printing press was established at Vienna, and two Serbian newspapers appeared, *The Serbian Gazette* and *The Slavo-Serbian Journal* (1791–4). But the Serbs learned by bitter experience that the civilized power of Austria would be a more thorough opponent of their national life than the barbarous but easy-going government of the Sultan. 'They hate Austria more than Turkey, because Turkey only scourged their bodies, while Austria has stifled their souls.'[1] North of the Danube the Serbs found that they could receive the elements of education, only to be baulked of the freedom which that education made them desire. The scene of the Serbian struggle therefore shifted once more to Turkey, where the peasant leaders hoped to secure a form of provincial autonomy with the help of the Russian Empire, which had been recognized by the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji (1774) as the protector of the Orthodox subjects of the Porte.

The appeal of the Serbs met with a favourable response

[1] Berry, p. 124.

from the Sultan Selim III, who granted them a limited form of self-government, religious liberty, and commercial freedom. Their princes (*knezi*) were to be elected in democratic assemblies, their financial obligations were fixed and reduced to imperial taxation only; while the Janizaries, the real oppressors of the unfortunate peasants, were forbidden to enter or inhabit the pashalik of Belgrade (1793). But the Sultan was far away. The Janizaries were on the spot and in no temper to allow their victims to escape from thraldom. Defying their distant master, they carried devastation and slaughter far and wide amongst all who resisted their will. In 1801 they assassinated the pasha of Belgrade, and the country was completely given over to anarchy under the nominal rule of four Turkish rebel chiefs.

Life was insupportable for the Serbs. Once more they appealed to Constantinople. Their leaders met together and addressed a petition to the Sultan. 'We are attacked', they said, 'in respect of life, religion, honour. There is not a husband who can be sure of protecting his wife; nor a father his daughter, nor a brother his sister. Monasteries, churches, monks, priests, nothing is safe from outrage.'[1]

Western nations, largely misled by the exaggerations and misrepresentations of the Austrian press, have often expressed contempt for the barbarous, turbulent, and unprogressive Serbs. Our soldiers have noticed the miserable poverty, squalor, and primitive conditions of life in Macedonia. What has made Macedonia a desolation has been the feeble and corrupt Turkish government, which allowed free play to all the elements of disorder and terrorism. That Turkish domination brought misery to all the Balkan peoples, and

[1] Quoted in Denis, p. 48.

when we read a cry of despair like that which I have just quoted, we cease to be struck by the hatred of the Serbs for the Turks or by their undeveloped civilization. Rather we are amazed that a people who only emerged from Turkish misgovernment less than a century ago should be so tolerant and open-minded and so progressive as the Serbs in recent years have shown themselves to be.[1]

In answer to this last appeal the Sultan ordered the disturbers of the peace to respect the rights of the Christian peasants and threatened them with punishment. The only result of this was that the Moslems of the pashalik carried out a savage massacre of the most conspicuous Serbian leaders. One hundred and fifty were killed in January 1804, and seventy-two heads were exposed on pikes at Belgrade. The Serbs saw that the hour had come when they must effect their own salvation. It was useless to go on hoping against hope for succour from distant protectors. They succeeded in temporarily sinking their internal dissensions, and resolved to unite in a furious revolt which should bring either liberty or annihilation.

Thus the Serbs were the first of the Balkan peoples to raise the standard of rebellion in a war of national liberation. They, too, in a peculiar degree, achieved their own independence. The Greeks fought for themselves; but without the intervention of the Powers, at the critical moment when

[1] Miss Durham describes how she helped an unfortunate wretch to escape from Macedonia and cross the frontier into Serbia. She received a pathetically grateful letter from Belgrade. 'He had never before known, he said, what it was to be in a free and civilized land. There are people in England who believe that Serbia is a wild and dangerous place. They are those who do not understand what it is to be a subject of the Sultan.' Durham, p. 86.

Ibrahim Pasha had virtually stamped out the insurrection, the Greek kingdom could not have been created. The Bulgars owe their liberation to Russia. To Russia's wars with Turkey the Serbs also owe the military embarrassment of the Sultan, who was unable to overwhelm the rebels of the Shumadia. Still the hard and continuous years of fighting were the work of the Serbs themselves, unassisted by any sympathy or material help from Western Europe and only supported by a very small Russian force, which was withdrawn when Napoleon invaded Russia itself. Serbia does not forget so proud a national tradition, and round the cross on her coat of arms are four S's (in Serbian, C's) which I have heard interpreted, '*Sama Srbiya sebe spasela*'—'Serbia alone delivered herself.'[1]

The leader who came forward at this crisis was George Petrovitch, better known by his Turkish name of Kara-George (Black George), the grandfather of King Peter. An illiterate peasant of the Shumadia, he had seen something of war as a volunteer in the Austrian army, and had made a little money by dealing in pigs. He owed such command as he had over the loyalty of his fellow-Serbs to his huge physical strength, his courage, his violent temper, and his undeniable genius for irregular warfare.

So thorough was his success that by 1807 northern Serbia from the Drina to the Timok had been freed from the Turks, who were even driven from their garrison towns. The Serbians then settled down—like any newly-emancipated people—to quarrel among themselves. But the time soon came when Turkey was able to collect her scattered forces to deal thoroughly with the Serbian insurrection. In 1812 the little Russian auxiliary force was withdrawn. At their

[1] The correct meaning, I understand, is *Samo sloga Srbina spasava*—'Only in the union of Serbs is salvation.'

departure a 'pope' celebrated the Holy Eucharist and read for the Gospel the passage, 'Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God; believe also in me . . .' Kara-George and his lieutenants took an oath of eternal fidelity to Russia, but their hearts must have been heavy with foreboding as they saw the few supporters they had had march away and leave them alone. By the treaty of Bucharest (1812) the Russians had indeed extorted from the Sultan a promise that the Serbs should have the administration of their own affairs, but the Turkish troops were to come back to the fortresses and that meant the return of the old order.

In the following year the blow fell. A large Turkish army invaded Serbia. Weakened by the long years of struggle, in which many of the stoutest hearts had perished, and depressed by their isolation, the Serbs were in no condition to resist. Kara-George himself fled into Hungary and was promptly imprisoned by the Austrian police. Those who remained in Serbia were the victims of the exasperated Turkish army. The victors exploited their success with ferocious stupidity and spoke of exterminating the rebellious race. In the neighbourhood of Krushevatz only one man in every six was said to have survived. On either side of the road at the entrance to Belgrade some sixty prominent Serbs were impaled, amongst whom were priests and monks, their bodies being eaten by the dogs.

Thus in 1813 the only result of ten years' hard fighting was the scrap of paper on which the Sultan had accorded to the Serbs the internal government of their province. Yet out of that Article VIII of the treaty of Bucharest has grown the independent kingdom. For the Turkish government, looking around for some satisfactory method of making its authority felt so far from Constantinople, decided to recognize one of

the Serbian leaders as the responsible head of the people. The man who accepted this difficult and dangerous position was the second liberator of Serbia, Milosh Obrenovitch. Something more than the courage and strength of Kara-George was needed. Milosh brought to his task the additional advantages of oriental cunning and a complete lack of scruple. Though undoubtedly a brave fighter, he preferred to gain his ends by diplomacy rather than war. Yet, successful as Milosh was, Kara-George has always been the hero of the wars of independence. To Milosh clings the taint of having deliberately continued those habits of cruelty, fraud, and narrow-minded egoism which are the curse of a long oppressed people, and which it was Serbia's highest interest to eradicate.

By alternately using the weapons of bribery, rebellion, and the threat of Russian intervention after the final fall of Napoleon in 1815, Milosh succeeded in getting himself recognized as autonomous *knez* of Serbia. His position, however, was precarious for the next fifteen years until the Russians, by the treaty of Adrianople (1829), extorted from the Sultan the edict of 1830, which is the charter of Serbia's independence. Milosh was accepted as hereditary prince; the Sultan resigned all pretension to interfere in Serbian internal affairs or the administration of justice; Mohammedans were forbidden to reside in the country, except in those towns where the Ottoman government continued for nearly forty years to maintain its garrisons.

Thus modern Serbia was launched. A tiny peasant state, consisting only of the northern territories between the Drina and the Timok, and the valleys of the Western Morava and Ibar. The hand of the Turk was removed, but the evil results of his rule could not be abolished in a day. Every-

thing remained to be done in the way of educating the people in industry and citizenship, and a rough schoolmaster they had in Milosh Obrenovitch. The Prince of Serbia did not affect the style of any modern European royalty. His favourite residence at Kraguyevatz, close to the mountains of Rudnik, into which he could retreat when necessary, was a simple Turkish house, displaying the crescent over the door. His office of state was a little room furnished with maps and captured Turkish flags. Unable to read or write, he had a secretary who gave him the news and interpreted some of the legal codes of Western Europe. Seated on cushions on the floor, with a turban on his head, he gave audience to his visitors exactly in the fashion of his Turkish predecessors.

Not only in the outward details of his manner of life but in character also Milosh was a barbarian—the product of anarchy. His temper was often ungovernable, and he met the slightest resistance to his wishes with summary imprisonment. His opponents, who naturally were not few, he removed by force or assassination. When Kara-George ventured back into Serbia in 1817 to renew the fight for independence Milosh had him murdered in his sleep, and sent his head to the Sultan, accompanying this pledge of good faith by demands in the interests of the Serbian people. The Archbishop Nikshitch was assassinated in his palace. By such means Milosh succeeded in imposing his authority on his turbulent subjects.

He had also other methods of building up his power. He was responsible for the tribute payable to the Turkish government. This he forced the Serbs to pay in Austrian money, while he himself forwarded it in the less valuable Turkish currency and kept the difference. He reserved for himself the monopoly of dealing in certain articles, and for-

bade the development of the salt-mines in Serbia, lest they should reduce his profits from similar enterprises in Roumania. For years he never called together the Skupshtina or national assembly.

His wife, the Princess Liubitza, was a fitting companion for such a monarch. She had fought in the ranks of the insurgents and kept their courage alive in the darkest hours. As princess she cooked her husband's meals and waited at table on the male members of the household. Her only knowledge of civilized Europe was derived through her daughter, who had married a shop-keeper in Zimun, opposite Belgrade. She imitated her husband's methods of dealing with rivals. When Milosh, who in so many ways continued the Mohammedan tradition, was captivated by other ladies, his wife would finish them off with a gun and then retire into the mountains until her lord's anger had evaporated.

Nevertheless, this barbarian had a very shrewd idea of what his country needed. The alternative to his autocracy was an anarchy of quarrelling chiefs, and he used his power for many beneficent ends. He first gave Serbia roads and schools; he encouraged the press; he laid the foundations of the army and civil service; he freed the national Church from the control of the Greek Patriarchate in 1831, since when it has been autonomous with a Serbian Metropolitan at Belgrade. Above all, in 1833 the old Turkish system of land-tenure was abolished and the peasants became the owners of the soil, a reform so successful that Serbia may be said in modern times to have had no agrarian problem.

Milosh, however, had made many enemies amongst those who wished to share in the government of the country and those who objected to his western innovations. He might have successfully resisted all efforts to deprive him of power

but for the existence of a rival dynasty. The malcontents could appeal to the memory of the dead hero, Kara-George, and claim the princely throne for his son. So in 1839 Milosh was at last driven from Serbia, after abdicating in favour of his sons. The elder son, Milan, died almost at once, and his brother Michael succeeded him at the age of 16, only to follow his father into exile in 1842, when a series of faction fights ended by placing on the throne the representative of the rival house, Alexander Karageorgevitch.

. . . . . .

Throughout his reign Prince Alexander was troubled with Obrenovitch plots. By his refusal to take part in the Crimean War against the Turks he incurred great unpopularity, although in 1856 he gained the collective guarantee of the Powers for Serbian liberties. The result was that in 1858 he too followed the example of his predecessors and went into exile with his young son Peter, of whom we shall hear more in after years.

The veteran Prince Milosh returned to the throne and lived for two years, being again succeeded by his son Michael in 1860. This prince, who proved the ablest ruler modern Serbia has had, destroyed the last visible sign of Turkish rule in his country. After a disturbance in the streets of Belgrade in 1862 the Turkish commandant opened fire on the town. Russia and France, Serbia's traditional friends, demanded the removal of the garrisons, but Great Britain and Austria supported Turkey, the former from fear of Russian influence, the latter because she wished to see no diminution of Turkish authority except in her own favour. Austrian statesmen clung to Metternich's pronouncement that Serbia must be either Turkish or Austrian, and they preferred the suzerainty of the Turk (whom the Emperor Francis II called ' the most

comfortable of neighbours') to a wholly independent Serbia.

In 1867 the situation was different. Austria had just been soundly thrashed by Prussia and was engaged in satisfying Hungary's demands for Home Rule. The Turks were occupied with one of the many risings in Crete. Michael again demanded the removal of the garrisons, and this time gained his point. Thus at last, after more than 400 years, the soil of Serbia was purged of the Asiatic conqueror. The suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire remained for a few years, but the night was over. The morning had dawned and the light of a new day had come, a new day in which the Serbian people should labour at the fulfilment of their destiny and enter again the stream of European civilization.

2

To the Treaty of Berlin

In this lecture I wish to deal with a short period, and shall only reach 1878, because, in that year, the Congress of Berlin re-fashioned the Balkan peninsula on a system which, with minor alterations, remained in force until five years ago.

The duty that lay before Prince Michael and his ministers was that of introducing among their liberated countrymen the best fruits of Western civilization. It was not an easy task. It meant heavy burdens of taxation and much hard work along new lines. The Serbs have shown themselves to be capable of supreme heroism and complete devotion to noble ideals in moments of crisis. The virtues of plodding, continuous labour and constructive thought they have found less congenial. The Bulgars have a saying to express this view. 'The Serbs', they say, 'are a people of warriors; but we are a military nation.' Although the Serbs have in recent years proved that they too are capable of national organization, and so have given the lie to this judgement by their neighbours, in the nineteenth century they appeared unprogressive and more devoted to their glorious past than anxious to lay the foundations of their country's future. Amongst the ruling class faction and intrigue were a continual hindrance to the government; while the peasants had been too long under the blight of Turkish misrule to accommodate themselves quickly to modern methods of working the land.

Yet slowly, but surely, Serbia was emerging from barbarism. To cross the Save from Hungary to Belgrade was still to leave Europe for the East. The Serbian capital was

a true oriental town in its squalor and shapeless confusion. But through it already ran a European main street with solid modern houses and shops where Viennese goods could be procured. In 1862, by the generosity of a patriotic citizen, a fine building was opened for the High School or College, which numbered twenty professors and several hundred students.

Meanwhile the countryside remained in a torpor of contented conservatism. Agriculture was still in a rudimentary stage. Manures were little used, and the primitive wooden plough only scratched the surface of the soil, from which a meagre crop was gathered, sufficient for the peasants' modest needs. It was not a country to attract the foreign traveller, for inns were few and far from comfortable, though the presence of chairs to sit upon, and knives and forks to use at table, contrasted favourably with anything to be found on the Turkish side of the frontier.

One sign of change, much lamented by many as an indication that 'the country was going to the dogs', was the weakening of the institution known as the *zadruga*.

The *zadruga* is the family community, consisting of anything up to thirty or forty persons, living together, owning and working the land together. There is no inheritance or partition of the family property. When the head of the house dies, the estate is not divided, nor does it pass to any one member, for the whole body, which is the collective owner, continues in possession. The father or the eldest brother will be the representative of the *zadruga*. He has a moral authority over the rest based on his age and experience, but he cannot sell the property of the family without their consent. On marriage the husband normally takes his bride into his home circle, and, if there is no room under the family roof, another small house will be built near by for the young

couple, who nevertheless will join the others at meals, at work, and in their leisure.

Such an arrangement has its great advantages. It keeps the people on the land, it gives them solidarity and assures to them their livelihood, while it checks self-seeking and encourages loyal co-operation. On the other hand, it has its drawbacks, which account for its decay. Individual initiative was paralysed by the control of the large group, some members of which would always be found to oppose new and improved methods of industry. Consequently the code of 1844 had permitted the individual to demand his share of the estate as a separate property and to dispose of it in his will. The resulting change from collective to private ownership was naturally accompanied by troubles and difficulties, which caused grave misgivings in the hearts of those to whom the old order was dear.

At this time, when Serbia was halting uncertainly between the old world and the new, the nation was fortunate in the possession of so able a prince as Michael. Sixteen years of exile had taught him courage and prudence, and given him a wide acquaintance with Europe. He spoke and wrote French and German, and understood Russian. A Serbian writer [1] says that he 'highly esteemed the English as a people who loved liberty and respected lawful rights, but regretted the great fault of their policy, their support of the Turks'. Under his rule material prosperity began to develop. Schools of agriculture taught the peasants new and more productive methods, the breeding of live stock was improved, the wasteful destruction of timber was checked and afforestation begun. The charter of 1861 set the Serbian democracy on a firm basis, by substituting regular elections for mass

[1] Militchevitch, p. 485.

meetings with their tumultuous procedure. A French officer, Col. Mondain, was Secretary for War, and could provide in case of necessity an army of 150,000 men with seven batteries of artillery, drawing munitions from the arsenal at Kraguyevatz.

Hopes for the stability and progress of the country rose high. The old dynastic feuds seemed to have been composed. Two princesses of the House of Karageorgevitch were present when, on the feast of the Holy Trinity in 1865, Michael celebrated the jubilee of Serbian independence amidst general rejoicings.

But many looked to the Prince of Serbia to do greater things. It was hoped that he would be the emancipator of the Southern Slav peoples; that, as united Italy had grown up round the little state of Piedmont, so all the Slav subjects of Turkey would be gathered together into a single nation and the principality of Serbia expand into a great Balkan kingdom, stretching from the Black Sea to the Adriatic. In Michael's day such an ambition was not so extravagant as it has since become. It was a time of change, when new nations were being formed. Italy had just been united. The Roumanians had shaken off Turkish control and elected a prince of their own. The eyes of the Slavs in the Ottoman Empire naturally turned to that corner of the Balkan peninsula where independence had been won. The peasants of Bosnia and Hertzegovina longed to break the yoke of their landlords and enjoy the liberties of their fellow Serbs across the Drina. The same was true of the Serbs of Old Serbia. Also there was then no Bulgaria; Western Europe was unaware of the existence of a Bulgarian people. The Bulgars, who were as yet only the labouring class of the eastern half of the Balkans, were indeed just beginning to awake to the idea of nationality.

Their religion was the same as that of the Serbs. Their leaders, who plotted and planned for a revolution against the Turkish government, were often welcome guests at Belgrade. A little luck, some years of strenuous work, and it seemed probable that the Bulgars and Serbs would merge into one people under the firm and wise government of Prince Michael. There was even a treaty in 1867 between him and the Bulgarian revolutionary committee by which it was arranged that he was to be sovereign of the two united nations.

Further, the literary movement of the middle of the century had given to all the Southern Slavs an increased consciousness of their common inheritance of race and language. The Croatian poet Gai had called on them to realize within the Austrian Empire the union which they had known during the short period of Napoleon's possession of Illyria. The great-hearted Roman Catholic bishop Strossmayer was working for their education and unity. The most conspicuous figure amongst Serbian writers of that age was Vuk Karadjitch, the second founder of Serbian literature. A self-educated man, he laboured all his life to give a literary form to the common speech of the people and to complete that departure from the antiquated Slavonic which Dositey Obradovitch had begun. He chose as his medium of expression the beautiful speech of his native Hertzegovina, which has become the language of Serbian culture. It was in that cultivated tongue that the Archimandrite Joachim Byedov, who is chaplain at General Vasitch's head-quarters, made us a speech on the Orthodox Christmas Day, and very majestic and musical it sounded.

No less than forty-nine books stand to Vuk Karadjitch's credit in a dictionary of eminent Serbs. He encountered such opposition from old-fashioned circles in Serbia, on

account of his break with the old alphabet and the old language, that his books were for many years forbidden in the principality, but they were published in Vienna, Buda-Pesth, Leipzig, and other places, and not only gave the scattered Southern Slavs a common literature but introduced them to the notice of Europe at large. His greatest work was his monumental Serbian dictionary, published in 1818. He lived on till 1864 and continued to pour out works, including four large volumes of collected songs and ballads.

At the same time Croatian literature was being standardized on the model of the poets of Dubrovnik, and the Serbs of Serbia were producing their share of the national output of science and letters. Since 1847 the *Srpska Slovesnost*, a literary society of Belgrade, had published annually the volumes of its *Glasnik* (Reporter), to which many articles of high value were contributed. Belgrade was, in fact, beginning to take its place with Zagreb, Novi Sad, and other Southern Slav towns as a centre of intellectual light and leading. Throughout the Serbo-Croat lands the dawn of a new day seemed to be spreading, and a manifesto issued at Vienna in 1850 could proudly declare that all the Southern Slavs, of whatever state or church, whether they used the Latin or the Cyrillic alphabet, were one people and used one language. This union of culture could not but express itself in aspirations after political emancipation from the two empires which divided the Serbian race. Everywhere arose the prayer, ' Lord, declare to us that Thine anger is appeased and that Thou hast pardoned our faults. Lord, set an end to the punishment of the sons of Lazar, the martyr of Kossovo. Lord, grant us our place in the midst of the nations and deliver us from the Turk and the German.' [1]

[1] Denis, p. 92.

But the task of creating a ' greater Serbia ' was beyond the means which Prince Michael had at his disposal. The little principality could not hope to make any headway against either Austria or Turkey without allies ; and allies were hard to find. Russia was then occupied with her own affairs. She was engaged in liberating her serfs, and had not as much attention as usual to give to Balkan affairs. France, under Napoleon III, gave little sympathy or support to Serbia. Great Britain was the friend of the Turk. Of nearer neighbours, Roumania was but newly established and herself most insecure and distrustful of Slavs. Greece was feeble and divided, and, despite a Serbo-Greek alliance in 1867, would also resent the establishment of a powerful Slav state barring the way to her north-eastward expansion.

The one ally on whom Michael could depend was the other Serb state of Montenegro. Montenegro is a wild tangle of barren hills with very few fertile valleys, a country that owed its liberty to the harshness of its physical features. In fact, a popular story has it that when God was creating the world He brought the mountains along in a sack. By some accident the sack burst, and the mountains poured out higgledy-piggledy on to Montenegro. The state had been ruled by bishops for 150 years, the succession passing from uncle to nephew, since bishops of the Eastern Orthodox Church do not marry, when Bishop Danilo (1851–60) declared himself 'Prince', married a wife, and became an ordinary secular ruler. His nephew, Nicholas, who succeeded him, and who is the present King of Montenegro (though actually, as is well known, an exile in France), has had a long and, until this war, a most successful reign. Basing his policy on a continuous alliance with the Russian Empire, from which he received great financial assistance, he was ever ready to lead his hardy mountaineers to

battle to increase his territory or to gain a port on the Adriatic. Amid the prosaic dullness of the modern world, King Nicholas has been a striking figure of romance, master of guerilla warfare, paternal despot of his people, to whom he used to administer justice seated under a tree in his garden, untroubled by scruples, uncivilized even by his intimate knowledge of Europe.

During his reign Montenegro made some advance in material development, so that if I give a few details of life there, as they struck me when I visited Tsetinye in 1910, we may estimate what sort of an ally the little state would have been to Prince Michael fifty years ago.

I landed at Cattaro, an Austrian port, and drove up the magnificent Austrian road which leads to the Montenegrin capital, and is the only way by which carriages can enter the kingdom. Up and up the road zigzagged across the face of the precipitous cliffs that rise from the water's edge. When we had left all signs of verdure behind us and were among the bare rocks, we crossed the frontier. A six hours' drive through the wildest country brought us to Tsetinye. It was about the size of a good big English village, with a population of less than 2,000 inhabitants. The royal palace was a plain white-washed house of two stories and looked like a substantial English country inn. The Bank of Montenegro was an impressive building about the size of a labourer's cottage. There was an exhibition of Italian goods going on at the time, and I went in and watched the interest with which the Montenegrins examined the most commonplace articles of household furniture, regarding them evidently as great novelties. At the post office I asked for a stamp of the value of $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ in order to send a letter to England. I was told that they were unfortunately out of stamps of the values of $\frac{1}{2}d.$, $1d.$, and $2\frac{1}{2}d.$,

but that there was no need to worry as there would be a new issue in about a fortnight! The men are not partial to any form of work, except war, so that material progress of any considerable kind is impossible. Even if they did help their womenfolk to cultivate the land, they could make but little of the unproductive soil. The national industry of war, however, can always be practised with the neighbouring Albanian tribes, who are also usually spoiling for a fight and loathe the Montenegrins. Finally, Montenegro, which to-day appears only a spot on the map of Europe, was fifty years ago considerably smaller, having a diameter of about 22 miles.

From such an ally, however loyal, Serbia could not expect much assistance in the task of liberating the Balkan peninsula. Indeed, before anything had been openly attempted towards that object, Serbia suffered the terrible misfortune of losing her prince. Michael was assassinated on June 10, 1868, while walking in his park at Topshider, near Belgrade, with the girl to whom he was engaged. The murder has always been a mystery. Michael's success as ruler may have exasperated the supporters of the Karageorgevitch family into doing this dastardly act, so fatal to the best interests of their country, or it may merely have been the work of anarchists, who would murder any royalty on principle, for the sake of removing a head that bore a crown. Others again, asking the pertinent question '*Cui bono?*' 'Who profited by the murder?', have suspected Austria of being behind the fatal daggers.

If the removal of Michael was a godsend for Austrian policy, it was for Serbia an irreparable loss. Had he survived, it was not at that time a wild dream to look forward to the establishment of a united Slav state, including Bosnia, Hertzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, and Bulgaria. Not even

the successes of the Serbian army in 1912 could make up for this disaster, for in the meanwhile the follies and crimes of Michael's two successors, together with the disintegrating policy of the great Powers, destroyed all such ambitious projects. The history of the next thirty-five years may in fact be described as 'the decline and fall of the Obrenovitch dynasty'.

Prince Milan, who now succeeded his cousin, was only fourteen. Four years later, in 1872, he came of age and soon showed his character and intentions. He had much to recommend him; the royal gift (so striking a possession of our King Edward) of never forgetting a face; a genial manner with all classes which endeared his memory to many of his people and has made 'Milan' so common a Christian name in Serbia; the charm of a good conversationalist, quick and witty; great intellectual ability, ready eloquence, and a keen critical faculty which made him a dominant figure among his ministers and party-leaders. Those who have collected stamps or coins will remember the handsome boyish face with its rounded cheeks and its almost feminine appearance. He had all the attractiveness, too, of the ideal 'knut', knowing exactly what clothes to wear and taking life easily.

But he came from Paris, where he had succeeded in thoroughly misspending his boyhood. His education had lacked method. He had grown up without discipline or affection. The poison of scepticism, just then so strong in French life and thought, had eaten into his mind and soul, and he was wholly without faith in God or humanity, religion, patriotism, honour, or justice. His one fixed intention was to have a good time and to exploit his position in accordance with his baser instincts. Such was the prince who now came

to direct the lives and fortunes of a people who are nothing if not enthusiastic, idealistic, mystical, and devoted to the traditions of their church and nation. Such a prince and such a people could never be in true harmony. Milan hated the business of government. He despised the intriguing and factious politicians of the Skupshtina (Parliament) and the Court. He regarded existence in Belgrade as an intolerable exile from the gay life of Paris, Vienna, Biarritz, and the other centres of Society, where he spent much of his time. The generous emotions and ardent enthusiasms of the Serbs only aroused his sarcasm, and he ended by hating his own people. 'For the love of God,' he wrote to Queen Natalie about their son Alexander, 'and in the name of your child, do not trust the Serbs.' The Queen's reply was the right commentary on such a message: 'A King', she answered, 'is not crowned to distrust his people and to exploit them, but to live and to die with them.' [1]

Nine-tenths of the people wished to see their government following a Radical policy. The programme was simple—strict economy, extensive powers for local authorities, a Russian alliance, and a Slav foreign policy. But Milan wanted money, and the line of least resistance was to receive it from Austria-Hungary, in whose sphere of influence Serbia was now recognized to be. Rather than put himself at the head of his people in resistance to the Austrian menace and call on Russia for support, which might not be forthcoming, Milan preferred to accept the credits which were always at his disposal in the banks of Vienna. But if Austria-Hungary paid the piper, she naturally called the tune. Serbia became a happy hunting-ground for Austrian contractors. They received special privileges to the detriment of the natives.

[1] Denis, p. 96.

The country became deeply involved in debt. To carry through this policy of subservience to his paymaster and to govern against the wishes of the Radicals, Milan was obliged to have recourse to violence and deceit. The constitution was violated, elections falsified, the Skupshtina summoned, prorogued, dissolved, justice perverted, plots engineered by the police, politicians cynically bought or ruined, public officials dismissed if they did not carry out the king's illegal orders. In this riot of despotism it is small wonder that the tone of public life was debased. Particularly did this corruption invade the army. In an army such as the Serbian where service with the colours is short, and where there is but a small backbone of officers and non-commissioned officers, it is essential to maintain a high sense of duty and public spirit. More especially is this so in a country surrounded by potential enemies, and looking forward to the possibility of war to assure its expansion and free development. It was therefore disastrous that Milan should have brought officers into the intrigues of political life, bought their assistance with promotions, distinctions, or money, and filled the higher ranks with men remarkable for success at Court rather than for military efficiency.

When Milan finally abdicated his throne and quitted the country, he left behind him a debt of 400,000,000 francs. The Serbs would have forgiven him that, but they could not forget that he demoralized their public life, and that (as we shall see later) he alienated the Bulgars; above all, that he sold them into the hands of Austria.

. . . . . .

Now let us look at his Balkan policy and the attempts which he made to fulfil Serbia's dreams of expansion. In 1875 an insurrection broke out in Hertzegovina and rapidly spread

through Bosnia. The unfortunate peasants of those provinces suffered the worst evils of Turkish rule. The triple exactions of their Mohammedan landlords, of the imperial exchequer, and of the farmers of the revenue, weighed heavily on the impoverished country. Across the Drina they saw their fellow Serbs at least free from the Turk and masters of the soil. Unable to endure their position any longer, they rose everywhere in revolt.

Here was Austria-Hungary's chance. If she could march her armies into the two provinces and restore order, she could then turn to Europe, point out the eminent service she had rendered to civilization, and insist that she had better remain to administer the country in the interests of the inhabitants. Prince Metternich had long before laid down that Serbia must be either Turkish or Austrian. But Austria in those days was pre-eminently the European Power which stood for legitimism, that is, for the public recognition of rights conferred by treaties or hereditary descent. She could hardly, therefore, march into Serbia and annex it. Her aim was rather to surround and penetrate the little principality until the day when Serbia should be unable to resist peaceful annexation. Such a policy was cheaper and less provocative than more violent and dashing methods. In the occupation of Bosnia-Hertzegovina the Austro-Hungarian government saw a grand opportunity to cut off Serbia from all hope of westward expansion and to carry its power far on the way to Salonika, already a constant object of Viennese policy.

But if the revolt was Austria-Hungary's opportunity, much more so was it Serbia's. 'Bosnia-Hertzegovina', says M. Tsvijitch, the celebrated Serbian geographer, 'is not merely for us what the Trentino and Trieste are for Italy. . . . They have

for Serbia the same importance that the environs of Moscow have for Russia, or the most vital parts of Germany and France have for the Germans and the French.' The two provinces were the home of the purest Serb traditions, and their dialect had been accepted as the literary expression of the Southern Slavs. That was the sentimental and racial reason for their supreme importance to Serbia. There was also the economic and strategic danger threatened to Serbia, should Bosnia-Hertzegovina not be recovered but come under Habsburg control. Serbia would then find the Austro-Hungarian army on her western as well as her northern frontier, and all hope of penetrating to the Adriatic Sea would be indefinitely postponed, if not entirely quenched.

Ristitch, Milan's minister, saw all the dangers that would have to be faced should Serbia embark on a policy of adventure. The Turkish army, always a formidable fighting force, would overwhelm the Serbs, if it could be wholly massed against them. A Serbian invasion of the rebellious provinces would also, if successful, mean a conflict with Austria-Hungary, in which Russia would probably not interfere, while France was then in no condition to support other nations' crusades. On the other hand, Old Serbia too broke into rebellion, and this was followed by a similar movement in Bulgaria. If Serbia could only act quickly and establish herself in Bosnia-Hertzegovina and Old Serbia, it would take time to dislodge her, and meanwhile the example of insurrection would probably spread far and wide over the whole of Turkey in Europe. Also Balkan statesmen have been taught by long experience that with the Powers nothing succeeds like self-help. Possession is nine points of the law. If they could maintain a position, however precarious, in the 'unredeemed'

Serbian lands, the Serbs could look forward with confidence to being ultimately supported by Russia. Ristitch therefore decided to act, and all Serbia was behind him.

The essence of his plans was quick and decisive action, the immediate occupation of Bosnia by the Serbian army. And here whatever chance of success there had been was ruined by the hesitations and delays of Prince Milan. When at last, in June 1876, the prince brought himself, under the pressure of his subjects' opinion, to declare war, it was too late. The Turks had by then quenched the feeble fires of the Bulgarian rising with the blood of the slaughtered peasants, and having had the necessary time were ready to turn their whole force on to the Serbs. Worse still, in July 1876 the Emperors of Austria and Russia met at Reichstadt and came to an informal agreement by which they arranged that Russia should limit her sphere of action in the Balkans to the East, leaving the West (that is to say, the Serbs) to Austria-Hungary.

Deprived of the chance of ultimate Russian support, the position of Serbia was hopeless. Her soldiers fought bravely and well, and had the assistance of many Russian volunteers. But the army had not been thoroughly organized for war, and soon the Turks began to invade Serbian territory. The Serbs were only saved from disaster by the intervention of Russia, which in October 1876 imposed an armistice on the Turks. A conference then met at Constantinople, which arranged for reforms to protect Turkey's Christian subjects, and the armistice was converted into a peace. But the promised reforms were not put in force, and in 1877 Russia, supported by Roumania, declared war on Turkey. Not content with her beating of the previous year, Serbia joined in the attack on the common enemy, this time with success.

The Turkish army had its hands full elsewhere, and the Serbs triumphantly conquered and occupied Nish and the valleys of the Nishava and Southern Morava.

But Russia had entered on this war for love of the unfortunate Bulgars, not for the Serbs whom she had agreed to consider as Austria-Hungary's affair. As the existence of the Bulgarian State dates from the end of this campaign, and since it is impossible to follow further Serbian history without some knowledge of the Bulgars, let me now pause to consider that people, who are to-day our immediate opponents in Macedonia.

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The first point to grasp about the Bulgars is that, unlike the Serbs and Russians, they were originally not Slavs at all. Their early history is wrapped in considerable mystery, but we may say roughly that they entered the Balkan peninsula in the seventh century, as a Mongolian central-Asiatic race, akin to the Huns and Turks. Of recent years, since Serbia and Bulgaria have become usually hostile and always suspicious towards each other, many Bulgarian writers have rejoiced to emphasize their people's Tartaric origin. Pure Tartars, however, they certainly are not. Once settled south of the Danube they accepted the language and customs of the Slavs amongst whom they found themselves. The old Bulgarian language disappeared and their present speech is pure Slavonic. They were converted to the Slav form of Christianity and they intermarried with the Slav race, so that in the west of Bulgaria, where the survival of the Slavs was most widespread, there is little difference between the Bulgar and his Serbian neighbour over the frontier. In fact, in 1878, when the principality of Bulgaria

was being created, many of the inhabitants of the western districts asked to be incorporated in Serbia.

The history of the Bulgars, the long centuries during which they made no attempt to challenge their Turkish masters, and their final liberation by arms other than their own, might point to a lack of initiative and some natural docility to authority. Certainly of late years their present king and his court have seemed able to drive the Bulgars along any line of policy. But there is no doubt about the energy, the discipline, and the persistent industry which have enabled the people to develop their country's resources very rapidly in the last forty years. Still less is there any question about their capacity for war. When Serbia was attacked by Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Bulgaria in 1915, a prevalent feeling amongst the Serbs was that, given anything like equal conditions, their most dangerous opponents would be the Bulgars. General Vasitch, I am told, said that he would rather have to deal with two divisions of Germans than one of Bulgars.

Lying farther to the east than the Serbs, the Bulgars were naturally conquered first. They then settled down as drudges, without an educated class, without traditions, without hope. When the Serbs and Greeks achieved their independence the Bulgars made no sign of life. To Western Europe of the middle of the nineteenth century the Bulgarian race was unknown. But then began an intellectual awakening and the birth of nationalism, largely helped by the Serbian government, which printed Bulgarian books, opened Bulgarian schools, and generally encouraged the movement. Now the Turk, as we said before, professes to know nothing of separate nationalities under his rule. The only line of demarcation that he

recognizes is religious. Therefore the first step taken by the Bulgars was their demand in 1856 for a separate church with an organization independent of the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople, who had hitherto placed Greeks in all the bishoprics and higher ecclesiastical posts in Bulgaria. The Ottoman government, seeing nothing in this proposal but a Russian intrigue, made promises which it did not fulfil. A party of the Bulgars thereupon turned to France with a view to embracing Roman Catholicism. The Emperor Napoleon III entered into negotiations with the party-leader, Dragan Tsankov, and the result was the dispatch from Rome of a bishop to organize a Bulgarian Uniate Church (i. e. a national church with peculiar privileges, but under obedience to the see of Rome). This bishop landed at Salonika in 1861 and a week later disappeared, and with him collapsed the idea of a national conversion, though the little Uniate body still exists and has been used by Bulgaria as a weapon against Greeks and Moslems.

Meanwhile, the mass of the Bulgars had taken the decided step of refusing further to recognize the authority of the Patriarch. In 1870 the Ottoman government, thinking that the Bulgars might prove a useful counterpoise to the Serbs and Greeks, decided to grant their request, and to establish a Bulgarian Exarchate, or separate church, under an exarch who should reside at Constantinople and represent his co-religionists in their relations with the Sultan.

One point in the Sultan's *firman* (edict) establishing the Exarchate is of the utmost importance. The negotiations had been carried on between four parties—the Turkish government, the Greek Patriarch, the Bulgar leaders, and their friend and supporter, the Russian ambassador, General

Ignatieff. The plan which had been generally approved left the Bulgarian Exarchate still united to the Patriarchate, though self-governing, and defined its geographical limits. Behind the backs of the Russian ambassador and the Patriarch, the Turks agreed to grant the Bulgars virtual independence and to leave their boundaries undecided. The result of the first alteration in the *firman* was that the Patriarch excommunicated the Exarchate, and the Bulgars since that time have remained the one Balkan people who are not united to the others and to Russia by ecclesiastical communion. The second alteration was embodied in the tenth clause of the *firman* and ran as follows: 'if all or two-thirds at least of the Orthodox inhabitants of districts, other than those enumerated above, wish to submit to the Bulgarian Exarchate in spiritual matters, and if this is stated and proved, they shall be authorized so to do . . . .'[1] This looks like a harmless and thoughtful provision for the future. Actually it has been used by the Bulgars in a most sinister manner for the extension of their influence. In this they had the great advantage that they were looked upon with considerable favour by the Turkish government and encouraged at first against the Greeks and also the Serbs, who now put in a claim to the old Serbian bishoprics of Skoplye and Petch. To the results of that tenth clause we shall come presently.

Six years after the foundation of the Exarchate, the Bulgarian insurrection broke out. It was no more than a feeble and local affair, and was stamped out with brutality by Turkish irregular troops. But the 'Bulgarian atrocities' of the Turks roused public indignation in Europe. Mr. Gladstone poured out speeches denouncing the assassins,

[1] Text of *Firman* in *Balcanicus*, pp. 286–90.

but failed to move Mr. Disraeli's government from its attitude of benevolence towards the Sultan. Russia, on the contrary, took up arms. Her armies crossed Roumania in 1877, and after breaking the long and desperate resistance of the Turks marched to the walls of Constantinople. Turkey was obliged to give in and agree to the treaty of San Stefano, by which Russia provided for a great Bulgarian principality, including what have since been known as Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia, all Macedonia, and the Aegean coast to the east of Salonika. Had this treaty been carried into effect Bulgaria would have been by far the largest state in the Balkans, stretching from the Danube to the Aegean Sea, and from the Black Sea to Albania, thus breaking European Turkey into two parts and separating Greece and Serbia.

But the treaty was not allowed to stand. Austria-Hungary would not tolerate the intrusion of a new state between herself and her coveted goal of Salonika. Both Austria-Hungary and Great Britain suspected that the new principality would be guided and dominated by Russia. Consequently a European congress was held at Berlin to revise the Balkan situation. Three statesmen, Prince Bismarck, the German Chancellor, Count Andrassy, the Austro-Hungarian Chancellor, and Mr. Disraeli, acting together, so altered the provisions of the treaty of San Stefano as to establish a small principality of Bulgaria, stretching from the Timok to the Black Sea between the Danube and the Balkan Mountains. Southern Bulgaria, called Eastern Roumelia, was to be governed by a Christian official appointed by the Porte; while Turkey, promising to introduce reforms favourable to the Christian population, was confirmed in the rest of her European possessions, with the exception of concessions

on her frontiers to Austria-Hungary, Serbia, Roumania, and Montenegro.

The Bulgars had thus seen Macedonia given to them, only to see it at once withdrawn. Their appetite was whetted. They foresaw the coming collapse of the Turkish empire in Europe, and were determined that when the day for dividing Turkey's estate came, they should have the lion's share. Macedonia must be shown to be Bulgarian in race, language, and sympathy. Thus Bulgaria would in time become the predominant state of the Balkans, holding the central strategic position and controlling both the main trade-routes. The story of the Bulgarian attempt to do this has been called 'the folk-war', which made a hell of Macedonia during the thirty years before the Balkan War of 1912.

Macedonia is not a province with exact limits. At the present moment it is nominally divided between Serbia and Greece. It is rather the name vaguely given to all that debatable block of country where the Greeks, the Serbs, the Bulgars, and the Albanians meet and mingle. The confusion of races is rendered yet more perplexing by the presence of a number of Turks, and of Kutzo-Vlachs, supposed to be the descendants of the original Romano-Illyrian stock who were in the peninsula before the Slavs came.[1] Each of the Balkan States has cast covetous eyes on Macedonia and tried to prove part or the whole of it to be by nature hers; while the Albanians vigorously resent any

[1] Batachin, where one of our A.S.C. (M.T.) companies was billeted in October 1916, is a Kutzo-Vlach village. The people speak a dialect similar to Roumanian. Their houses were built by the Roumanian government, and a school provided from the same source was being constructed when the war broke out.

attempt to deprive them of the anarchy and tribal independence which they have enjoyed for centuries.

In the work of staking out a claim Bulgaria set the pace. She had many advantages. Unlike Serbia, she had free access to the sea. Unlike Greece, she had a fine and fertile soil. She possessed an invaluable asset in the steady, sober, and industrious character of her people, less given to gusts of emotion and passion than either of her neighbours. While Greece was unable to settle down to peaceful development for thinking how she might extend the narrow limits of her rocky kingdom, while Serbia was fast in the economic toils of Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria increased rapidly in riches and material power. Alternately courted by Russia and Austria-Hungary, she could usually count on financial support from Russia; and when the Powers combined to maintain *gendarmerie* officers in Macedonia, the Russian representatives acted as though they had been appointed at Sofia. Further, to the Turks, the Greeks and Serbs had always had the character of revolutionaries and implacable enemies. The Bulgars had been less intractable and owed their first step towards nationality to the Turkish plan of using them against the other Christian peoples. Thus there occurred the extraordinary situation of the Bulgars terrorizing parts of the Macedonian country-side with the connivance and even sometimes the support of the Turkish governing officials.

Starting from their legal basis in the tenth clause of the Sultan's *firman* of 1870, the Bulgars have conducted a continuous campaign by fair means or foul to prove that the inhabitants of Macedonia are Bulgars. The people themselves did not know what they were. They only knew that they lived in a turmoil of warring interests and corrupt administration, and longed for a firm and equitable govern-

ment. Amongst these people came the agents of the Bulgarian Exarchate and a revolutionary committee called the 'Internal Organization'. The fairest means which they adopted was that of building schools and churches, a game at which the Greeks were their equal, while the Serbs did their best to emulate them in northern Macedonia, and even the Roumanians took a hand. The foulest means was the simple terrorization by murder, arson and pillage, of those who would not declare themselves Bulgars, or rather 'Exarchists'. The old race-feud of Bulgar and Greek broke out again, bringing with it more misery and uncertainty of life than ever the Turk had caused. The Bulgarian bands descended from the mountains, secretly supported from Sofia, with the twofold object of extending their national influence, and, by throwing the blame for their atrocities on the Turks, of provoking European intervention and the cession of Macedonia to Bulgaria. On the body of the Bulgarian 'comitadji' chief, Sfetkoff, who was killed in 1905, was found a document ordering that 'any Christian who refuses assistance must be killed in such a manner that the blame may be thrown upon the forest guard, Imam or Dere Bey, and two witnesses must be forthcoming who will persuade the court that the murder has been committed by some such tyrant'.[1] Thus many an act of brutal violence, which stirred up European wrath against the Turk, was really the work of the Bulgar at the expense of his fellow Christian.

The wretched peasant was on the horns of a dilemma. If he agreed that he was a Bulgar, the 'comitadji' band would point out that it was his privilege and duty to assist them in their noble crusade. They would therefore live at his

[1] Crawfurd Price, *The Balkan Cockpit*, p. 347.

expense and trouble him for financial support. If he obstinately denied that he was a Bulgar, he might look forward with some certainty to attempts on his life, the burning of his crops or the destruction of his home. Even the educational propaganda of schools and churches, which looks such an innocent method of peaceful penetration, was pushed by similar means. Let me quote a single case which will serve as an example of Bulgarian methods of conversion to the Exarchate. It is the evidence of Kostadin Georgevitch, parish priest of Konyska, near Gyevgyeli, in the Vardar valley. 'Up till 1898 or 1899, I don't remember exactly, we were all under the authority of the Patriarchate (Greek) or, as we say here, we were Grecomaniacs. Then came the Bulgarian 'voivoda' John, a native of Karasula, who ordered me to give up the Greek school and to become a Bulgarian schoolmaster. If I refused, I should be killed. He further ordered me to inform all the peasants that they were to submit to the authority of the Exarchate. If they didn't, they likewise would be all massacred. Our only course, in accordance with his order, was to draw up two petitions, one addressed to the Exarch at Constantinople, the other to the Kaimakam at Gyevgyeli, asking them to attach us to the Exarchate, since we were Bulgars. We obeyed the order given to us. Some time later there came from Gyevgyeli a Turkish police official, who assembled us and put some questions to us. When, under the threats of the 'voivoda' John, the terrified people endorsed the terms of their petition, we were made into Bulgars!'[1]

It is hardly surprising that, seeing such methods at work in Macedonia, the Serbs and Greeks should have also fitted out

[1] *Balcanicus*, p. 277. Quoted without reference to any authority. But for Bulgarian propaganda see Durham and Upward, &c., *passim*.

and encouraged 'comitadji' bands to protect their kindred and to prevent the further spread of Bulgarization, till the whole of Macedonia reeled with propaganda. The Bulgars have had undoubtedly the best of the competition. They have shown themselves by far the best publicity-agents in pleading their cause before Europe. They have had the greatest measure of success in converting the natives of Macedonia.

Some writers, therefore, argue that the Bulgars have established their claim to those parts of the country in which the people have expressed their desire to be Bulgarian. To the Serbian and Greek contention that this result has been produced by liberal expenditure on schools, churches, and revolutionary bands, they reply that the fact remains that it has been produced. But that is not the end of the matter. The effect has been largely accomplished by sheer intimidation. From which I draw two conclusions; first, that Bulgaria must not enjoy the possession of lands which she has used such foul means to obtain, and secondly, that there has been no real test of Macedonian feeling.

I cannot pretend to speak with any authority about the true affinities of the Macedonian population. They differ from village to village. The people of Ekshisu fired on the Serbian troops in August last. The people of other villages have welcomed them. Lescovatz village, near Florina, is Turkish. Batachin is Vlach. If you study books on the population you will nearly always find that the author has some strong bias. There is no other explanation of the extraordinarily different figures and arguments produced.[1]

[1] See Appendix. Despite the varied estimates there given there seems to be a general agreement among the Bulgarian, Serbian, and German writers to put the Greeks at about 200,000 and the Slavs at something over a million.

The people whom one author classes as Serbs another counts as Bulgars, while there is no unanimity even about the total population; one cannot argue from names, for a man will change his name according to the Power which he is seeking to propitiate. Serbian parents named Markovitch may have children calling themselves Markov and temporarily sound Bulgars; and *vice versa*. Language does not settle the question, for the Macedonian Slavs speak a dialect that is about equally akin to Serbian and Bulgarian, while there is a Slav-speaking population who have been for centuries under the Greek Patriarchate and are now forced to talk Greek. The true Greeks are distinguishable from the Slavs by language and physical traits, but they are only to be found along the coast, where they predominate in the towns, and in the extreme south of Macedonia. The normal Macedonian village is Slav, since the Turkish minority tends to decrease. And those Slavs would, I believe, be quite content in time to be either Serbs or Bulgars, if they could be assured of a stable government. If historical arguments count for anything, Serbia has the better claim, for the mediaeval Serbian empire has left many traces in Macedonia in the way of architecture and writings, while the short-lived Bulgarian empires covered the country only in the dark ages. The district round Prilep, in fact, is the country of Kralyevitch Marko, the Serbian hero, and is filled with his churches and monasteries. One interesting bit of evidence from local customs is that the Slavs of Macedonia keep up the habit of celebrating their 'Slavas', or feasts of their family patron saints, a habit peculiar to the Serbian race, not found amongst the other Slavs and actually prohibited before now by the Bulgarian Exarchate as contrary to the Orthodox religion.

MACEDONIAN PEASANTS DANCING

A MACEDONIAN PEASANT FAMILY

One argument remains to be stated, namely the economic. The abrupt mountain barriers of the Balkan peninsula make communication difficult; but there are natural lines between the hills along which commercial activity can flow. Now Macedonia, for the most part, looks towards Salonika as its one outlet to the sea. From Salonika runs the corridor of the Vardar valley joining Serbia and the Mediterranean world. Northern and western Macedonia are necessary to Serbia, of which they are a continuation. They could only have economic affinities with Bulgaria, if that Power held, or had special rights in, Salonika. Eastern Macedonia is different. To the country round Kavalla and Seres Serbia makes no claim; and lying round the Struma river, it would seem to provide the natural commercial route between Sofia and the Aegean.

. . . . . .

I hope that the above short description of the incessant and bloodthirsty irregular war that has so long devastated Macedonia will have explained certain features of the population. Many visitors have expressed surprise at the poverty-stricken, unprogressive, unintelligent appearance of the people, and the poor use made of the land. But is this not to be expected, when for years the peasants have lived in a state of uncertainty and haunting terror? One feature of the landscape bears eloquent witness to the age-long spirit of fear that has lain like a cloud over Macedonia; the villages avoid the main roads. All the way from Salonika to Banitza, a distance of some 140 kilometres, one only passes through the two towns of Yenidje-Vardar and Vodena, and no villages, though the road skirts along the edge of Vladovo. The peasants have preferred to keep out of the publicity of the few thoroughfares. Nor is it

strange that the peasant is reluctant to say what is his nationality. Ask one of these Macedonians what he is. He will, of course, not tell a soldier of the Allies that he is a Bulgar. Nor will he be likely to say that he is Serbian or Greek. He does not know who may overhear him, or what might come of such a declaration, should the Bulgars come back. He will probably smile and say that he is *Makedonski*, which is a wise answer and one that has not yet been improved upon by the professors and journalists who have studied the question. The Macedonian child must have gone through a bewildering education in Serbian Macedonia. Starting perhaps with being educated as a Greek in a Patriarchist school, he then discovered, after the 'conversion' of his father and schoolmaster, that he was a Bulgar. Then came the Serbian army and annexed the country, whereupon our lad found that he was a Serb. Since 1915, no doubt, his village has changed its tune again and he is a Bulgar once more.

With these sudden changes, with all the uncertainty of life and property to which he was subjected by his Turkish masters and by the Bulgarian, Serbian, and Greek 'comitadji' bands before the recent wars, with the futile, lazy, and corrupt government of the Turkish days and its legacy of stagnation, the Macedonian peasant has never had a chance. The villages behind our lines are now enjoying such a peace as they have not known for years, though, of course, commerce on an ambitious scale is impossible with the railway monopolized by the armies and the sea threatened by submarines. We will not, therefore, dismiss Macedonia as hopeless. We will rather look upon it as a most unfortunate land, which it is a part of our mission to endow with peace and good government when the end of the war shall bring a new and reasonable arrangement of the Balkan States.

. . . . . .

Let me conclude this survey by stating the nature of the settlement made by the Treaty of Berlin in 1878. All the trouble of the years 1875–8 began with the rising in Bosnia-Hertzegovina. The question of those two provinces was settled by handing them over to Austro-Hungarian administration. This was done in spite of the protests of the Turkish government, whose continued suzerainty was, nevertheless, guaranteed. Austria-Hungary further acquired the right to maintain troops and to patrol the roads in the Sandjak of Novi-Pazar. The population of Bosnia-Hertzegovina bitterly resented this change of masters. The Mohammedans regretted the departure of their Turkish co-religionists. The Serbs loathed the idea of Austro-Hungarian domination, and maintained an attitude of defiance sometimes breaking out into open rebellion. The only element that welcomed the new *régime* was the Roman Catholic minority. But Count Andrassy could congratulate himself on having successfully taken a long stride towards the coveted Salonika, by thrusting the Austro-Hungarian armies between Serbia and Montenegro, and firmly establishing the imperial influence in the western half of the Balkans; Prince Bismarck was glad to see Austria-Hungary forgetting her exclusion from Germany and setting her face towards the East, where she would be a useful agent for German plans and German *kultur*; while Mr. Disraeli saw in the Austrian advance a substantial check to Russian aggression.

Lord Salisbury afterwards said that at the Congress of Berlin we had 'backed the wrong horse'. Yet it is difficult to see how else we could have shaped the broad lines of our policy. Russia was an aggressive Power, apparently bent on challenging our Asiatic interests. Neither Germany nor

Austria-Hungary had yet disclosed their later ambitions of expansion. It was natural to curb Russia by means of Austria-Hungary. The alternative was the division of European Turkey between the Balkan peoples, but Bulgaria was an unknown quantity and suspect of being entirely under Russian influence. Neither Greece, nor Serbia under King Milan, commanded the respect of Europe. Consequently the Turk remained in Macedonia, Albania, and Thrace. The one thing that might have been done at Berlin was the provision of means for enforcing those reforms in Macedonia which the Sultan promised but never carried out. Macedonia remained Turkish and suffered all the unrest and misery described above for thirty-four years.

Bulgaria was reduced to the country between the Danube and the Balkan mountains, including a Serbian population in its north-western corner, and was given a German prince, Alexander of Battenberg, as ruler under the suzerainty of Turkey. The world had not yet perceived the possible dangers of flooding the Balkans with royalties, chosen from the inexhaustible supply of German princely and ducal families.

Roumania received a stretch of territory between the Danube and the Black Sea, but without the strategic frontier to the south, which she demanded and for the sake of which she entered the war against Bulgaria in 1913.

Montenegro was nearly doubled in size (though that is not saying much), and received a tiny strip of coast, but without a respectable harbour.

Lastly, Count Andrassy and the diplomatists granted to Serbia complete independence from Turkey, and the districts of Nish, Pirot, Lescovatz, and Vranya, which her army had occupied. Serbia thus redeemed a portion of

her race and increased her territory by 50 per cent. I have heard King Milan praised on this account by Serbs and extolled as a conqueror, building the edifice of Serbian expansion and liberation. But, without prejudice to Milan, who was in a most difficult position, we may say that the net result of the treaty of Berlin was to thrust Serbia further into the toils of Austrian hegemony. The Austro-Hungarian armies were now on the Serbian frontier from Roumania all the way round to Mitrovitza in the Sandjak. Serbia saw herself cut off from her sister territory of Bosnia and the path to the Adriatic in a fair way to be closed for ever. She was later to find her other neighbours Bulgaria and Turkey sold to Vienna. Serbia was in an Austro-Hungarian prison, and, if the Treaty of Berlin enlarged the area of that prison, it also strengthened the prison-walls, while the exits were bolted and barred.

3

The Change of Dynasty

. . . sa dinastiyom Karageorgevitcha, koya ye dala dokaza da se c ideyama i ocechayima ne dvoyi od naroda. . . . Corfu Manifesto, July 29, 1917.

. . . with the dynasty of Karageorgevitch, which has shown that it identifies itself with the thoughts and sentiments of the people . . .

Since the war began our newspapers have made us familiar with the phrase *Drang nach Osten*, which means the 'Eastward pressure' of Germany and Austria-Hungary. This policy of extending their influence across the Balkans and the Turkish dominions has been of late years the main thread in the complicated policy of the Central Empires. The Treaty of Berlin had brought Austria-Hungary well within Turkish territory, and in the next year she formed that close alliance with Germany which soon became the Triple Alliance with Italy as the third partner, and which has been the source of so much alarm and trouble in modern Europe. Firmly based on the German alliance, Austria-Hungary proceeded to work her way across the peninsula towards Salonika and the Aegean Sea.

Serbian patriots saw with despair that King Milan had no intention of opposing the Austrian flood. He himself professed a neutral position as between Austria-Hungary and Russia. He saw that a struggle between these two Great Powers must come sooner or later. 'In the coming conflict between Germanism and Slavism,' he said, in the course of a speech at a 'Slava' on St. Nicholas Day, 1887, 'my intention and wish is that Serbia should be neutral.' But in view of

the continued aggression and intrigue of both her powerful neighbours this was precisely what Serbia could not be. In fact, she became the vassal of Austria-Hungary. In 1881 Milan concluded a secret agreement with Austria-Hungary, by which he renounced all pretensions to Bosnia-Hertzegovina and undertook that Serbia should make no treaties with foreign States without Austrian approval. In return for placing his country in her enemy's power he received a promise that his dynasty should be maintained on the Serbian throne. The existence of this private arrangement, which was not generally known till 1893, explains the ultra-Austrian attitude of King Milan—he declared himself king in 1882—during the rest of his reign. When the Serbs of Bosnia rose in rebellion in 1882 the Serbian government made no move to support them, though many individual Serbs crossed the frontier to help their brothers in their desperate bid for freedom from the Austrians.

Austria-Hungary for the next twenty-three years treated Serbia as a protectorate of her own. She spoke in Serbia's name at international tariff conferences; she hindered the construction of the railway between Serbia and Salonika so as to direct almost the whole of Serbia's trade to her own territories; she re-exported Serbian goods in her own name so that the origin of Serbia's few products was unknown to Europe; she imposed customs on Serbian commerce at the Iron Gates of the Danube, although one bank of the river is there Serbian; while communication between Serbia and Bosnia was methodically and meticulously suppressed. Serbia had only escaped from the Turkish economic system to be swallowed in the Austrian, and the exchange was not even commercially beneficial. From 1864 to 1884 Serbia's commerce grew in aggregate from 33,000,000 francs to

90,000,000 francs. In the next twenty years, 1884 to 1904, which we may take as roughly the period of subjection to Austria-Hungary, her commerce only rose from 90,000,000 francs to 127,000,000 francs.[1]

King Milan even allowed himself to be pushed into war with Bulgaria by his Austrian masters, thus thoroughly alienating the sympathy of the Bulgars from his own kingdom. In 1885 the inhabitants of Eastern Roumelia, which was still a Turkish province, suddenly proclaimed themselves Bulgarian subjects, and their adherence was accepted by Prince Alexander. Milan thereupon denounced the Bulgarian government for tearing up the Treaty of Berlin. He then inaugurated what has lately been the common Balka practice of demanding territorial compensations ; and before we condemn him for foolish jealousy, we should remember that the Treaty of Berlin had cruelly limited the boundaries of Serbia, excluding from her the Serbs both of Old Serbia and of western Bulgaria. What we may fairly condemn was the foolhardiness of entering on a military adventure with an incompetently-led and unprepared army.

On November 13 Milan declared war, and next day the Serbian army advanced along the direct route to Sofia. The Bulgars found themselves in a most embarrassing situation. Their troops were for the most part along the Roumelian frontier prepared to meet a Turkish attack. They had to be hurried across to the defence of the capital. But all the senior officers of the newly formed Bulgarian army had been lent by Russia, and the Emperor Alexander, resenting Bulgaria's independence in absorbing Eastern Roumelia, now withdrew them all. Bulgaria was left without an officer above the rank of captain. The army, however, was ably

[1] Stojanovitch, p. 139.

prepared for action by the junior officers and sergeants, met the Serbs on November 18 at Slivnitza, and was completely victorious. Pressing their advantage the Bulgars advanced into Serbia, and on November 26 appeared before Pirot which they occupied next day. Milan asked for an armistice, which was refused, and the Bulgars were marching on Nish when Baron Khevenhuller, the Austro-Hungarian minister, who had urged Milan to make war, hastily arrived at Pirot, and in the name of his government insisted on the conclusion of an armistice preparatory to peace. Bulgaria had no choice but to agree, and a peace was made in the following March which left the two States as they had been. The peacemaker, Khevenhuller, however, discovered that he had been premature ; Austria-Hungary would in fact have had no objection to sending troops into Serbia—nominally to support her, but actually to become her permanent protector—and the Baron was for a long while disgraced as a result of his too speedy intervention.

Serbia had received a nasty blow. Her military reputation sank very low and her debt mounted high. Yet it is not fair to lay this failure to the account of the people. They had had little enthusiasm for the war, and no confidence in their leaders, who were rather the king's political supporters than military experts. During the armistice Milan himself spoke of abdicating, a suggestion which was generally welcomed by public opinion ; but the solace which he received from Austria-Hungary soon restored his self-confidence, and he would have reopened hostilities had not the Skupshtina insisted on the conclusion of peace.

Although the constitution which Milan gave to Serbia in 1888 was a great advance in democracy, and made the ministers for the first time really responsible to the Skupshtina,

the last years of his reign were a record of futility and folly. His wife, the beautiful Queen Natalie, was Russian, and naturally opposed to her husband's Austrian connexion. She also very naturally resented the continual intrigues and scandals that destroyed the family life of the palace. This domestic discord had its evil effect in the country and discredited the nation abroad. Serbia was a remote and undiscovered corner of the Balkans. All that the ordinary west European public knew of her was the unsavoury character of her ruler, who dragged his country's good name through the dirt of fashionable watering-places and the doubtful quarters of the European capitals. So that, when in 1889 Milan really did abdicate, his departure was greeted with a sigh of relief, despite the lingering affection of some of his subjects for their genial monarch.

His son, Alexander, succeeded to the throne at the age of thirteen. It was a difficult position for the unfortunate boy. The only son of his father, without near relatives, he was the last hope of the house of Obrenovitch. His childhood had been spent amongst the storms of domestic and political strife. His boyhood was now devoted to excessive study under the guidance of M. Ristitch and other counsellors. The pressure of over-work, combined with the gloomy atmosphere of suspicion and intrigue with which he was surrounded, probably retarded his mental development and narrowed his sympathies. Alexander grew up heavy, silent, melancholy, without friends, a lonely and very pitiful figure. Suspecting plots on all sides and seeing nothing but selfish factions in the new democratic *régime*, he naturally turned for protection to his parents. Milan and Natalie had separated, but neither had completely severed their connexion with Serbia, where Milan was still nominally the commander-in-chief of the

army. They used to visit Belgrade alternately for some years until they both agreed to leave the country and allow their son to work out his own destiny.

The young prince began by declaring himself of age in 1893 and arresting his ministers one night when they were dining with him. He followed this up by annulling the new constitution and entering on a royalist and Austrian course of policy. In 1897 King Milan returned to Serbia and added his disturbing presence to the many warring elements already there. Into such confusion had the affairs of the country drifted that the Serbs even tolerated the very imprudent step which Alexander took in 1900. Having gone to see his mother at Biarritz, he fell madly in love with Draga Mashin, one of the late queen's ladies-in-waiting. The fact that Madame Mashin was the divorced wife of a Serbian officer by no means exhausted the seamier side of her past life. Also she was considerably older than the king. A marriage with a person of such character was vigorously opposed by Alexander's parents, his ministers, and his friends, who declared further that Draga was incapable of bearing a child, a vital necessity to the Obrenovitch dynasty. Such opposition only strengthened Alexander's determination, and at first the marriage had the happy result that the new queen absolutely forbade her husband's father to re-enter Serbia. But Draga was soon seen to be no saviour of her country. She irritated the army by the favours she procured for her two young brothers, the country by the Austrian intrigues in which she took part. The strict censorship of the press, the reactionary policy of the government, the serious condition of the national finances combined to disgust the Serbs with their king. The students of Belgrade rioted and demonstrated; but there was no movement of a national

character. The crash came suddenly in June 1903 when the famous double murder of Alexander and Draga by a *clique* of officers ended the dishonoured and unpopular dynasty.

The story of that night of the 10th of June is a sickening bit of mediaeval barbarity. The gang of officers secured control of the palace and proceeded to search for the doomed couple. The darkness, their own drunken excitement, and the efforts of one or two loyal officers prolonged the hunt. Finally the king and queen were discovered in a little dressing-room with a hidden door. They were retiring for the night when their enemies burst in on them. Alexander threw himself before his wife and was riddled with bullets. The conspirators then murdered Draga and proceeded to mutilate the bodies. The queen's two brothers were also killed, and some of the court officials who were committed to the cause of the late king.

All had happened suddenly and the nation was faced with a *fait accompli*. In the Balkans violent and brutal methods do not outrage public opinion to the same extent as they would do in Western Europe. The Serbs felt that what had been done had been done, and, however it had happened, they were well rid of the Obrenovitch. Events also continued to move rapidly. Eight days after the murder Prince Peter Karageorgevitch, son of Prince Alexander (1842–58), had been fetched from his retirement at Geneva. Already on June 15 he was proclaimed king by the unanimous vote of the national assembly. Before an awkward crisis had time to develop, or Austria-Hungary could see an opportunity to intervene, King Peter was installed, to the great relief of the nation. It was felt that the period of vassalage to Vienna was finished. It was hoped that the bad days of faction, intrigue, and personal monarchy had also come to an end. Miss Durham passed through Serbia in the following December

and records how a peasant in the train said to her, 'Now we have a king who is as good as yours, and Serbia will have her own again'.[1]

The new king had had more than his share of exile. Forty-five years before he had left Serbia after the revolution which had dethroned his father. Unlike the previous princely exiles he had found a home and a career in France, and with him French influence and culture entered Serbia. He had followed the profession of arms, passed through the military school of St. Cyr, and fought as a lieutenant of the French army through the Franco-Prussian War in which he was wounded and decorated. He had also fought for the national cause in the Bosnian insurrection of 1876. Though a soldier by training and inclination he had also used his time to study the thought and institutions of Europe, and was the author of a Serbian translation of Mill's 'Treatise on Liberty'.

He was now over sixty years of age, and before him lay a task which might well have given pause to a man in the prime of life. On the one hand, Serbia needed a firm yet liberal government, which should raise her from the degradation into which she had fallen and restore her self-confidence. On the other, all this must be done without giving any provocation, real or imaginary, to Austria-Hungary, who would certainly view with disfavour a Serbian resurrection.

The difficulties of his position as a reformer were numerous and formidable. In the first place, the finances of the kingdom were in a desperate condition. From his predecessor, Peter inherited a debt of 450,000,000 francs. The interest on the debt alone swallowed a quarter of the annual budget. The currency had been depreciated by 25 per cent. Also the public services were disorganized and corrupt, owing to the system

[1] Durham, p. 111.

of court favour which had obtained for the past thirty years. Some of the best servants of the State had retired from public life in disgust at the crime by which the revolution had been effected. The partisans of the late dynasty, though without any pretender to whom they could offer their support, naturally looked with disfavour on the present occupant of the throne. More serious still were the conflicts between the parliamentary leaders, who were the lawful government of the country, and the military *clique*, who had brought back King Peter and to whom he was to some unknown extent committed. Thirdly, the new reign opened under the cloud of European disapprobation. The follies of Milan had earned contempt for Serbia on all sides, a feeling which changed to horror, as the Austro-Hungarian press exploited the murder to discredit the whole nation. It must at that time have taken some courage to confess oneself a Serb in foreign countries. The officers of the Italian army returned their Serbian decorations. Great Britain withdrew her minister and insisted, as a preliminary to reopening relations, that all the officers concerned in the regicide plot should be cashiered. This was done in time, though the king had to provide the officers in question with other posts, until the call of active service brought them back to the army again. That nothing should be lacking to the general display of outraged morality, even the Sultan Abdul Hamid, his hands red with the blood of hundreds of thousands of Armenians and other victims, even he lectured the Serbs in exalted phrases on the undesirability of assassination.

If the spectacle of the last autocrat of Turkey playing the part of moral preceptor rouses our sense of the ridiculous, and although it is easy for the Serbs to retaliate on Europe by pointing out the violent ends which many rulers have met in

western countries, we cannot fail to endorse the general and emphatic condemnation of the crime of June 10. Western Europe does not hold up its mediaeval past as offering models of how changes of government should be made. On behalf of Serbia it should be remembered that she is but now emerging from that mediaeval condition in which murder sometimes seemed the only way out of an impossible situation. The virtues of homely kindliness, geniality, generosity, and heroic courage in adversity display another side of the primitive character of the Serbs, who, as a whole, knew nothing of the murder till it was accomplished. Nevertheless, though we admit that our own annals are stained with gory pages, and though we may make every allowance for a younger people, we must, for their own sakes, earnestly hope that in the future any individuals or parties amongst the Serbs who seek to gain power by the methods of the assassin will be punished with extreme severity. Serbia has won the hearts of all the Allies (and even of some of her enemies) [1] by her gallantry. In the years after the war her best asset will be the assurance that the firm government of King Peter and the present prince-regent have established the tradition in Serbian public life that private interest shall not poison the wells of loyalty and patriotism upon which the health of the nation depends.

To return to King Peter's difficulties. Under the manifold shortcomings of their late government the Serbs had seemed like a nation asleep. Industrial development had

[1] e.g. extract from the *Vossische Zeitung*, January 5, 1916, *2e Livre bleu serbe*, p. 22: 'They [the Serbian peasants] are naturally good men, untempted by any evil thought. We must abandon the stupid yarns which in our country depict Serbia as a land of highwaymen, assassins, bugs, and fleas . . .'

hardly begun and was in the hands of foreigners. The German economist, Fischer, writing in 1893, despaired of Serbian agriculture, which was still in a rudimentary state, while the peasants devoted a quarter of their time to singing, dancing, and church festivals. Only one-seventh of the land was under cultivation, and the growth of small properties from which the *zadruga* had disappeared had resulted in placing many of the farmers in the hands of money-lenders. With a dull indifference the people saw lands which were historically theirs invaded by alien races. Supported by Austrian encouragement the Albanians were increasing in Old Serbia; the Bulgars dominated the Macedonian country-side; the Magyars and Germans exploited the Serbs of Bosnia and southern Hungary. Despised abroad and without a vigorous life at home Serbia seemed unfitted to survive. To Austria-Hungary, at any rate, she appeared like a ripe apple about to drop into the hands that were waiting to receive her. A more than usually violent disturbance at Belgrade, an insult, real or pretended, offered to an Austro-Hungarian minister, and the imperial and royal army would cross the frontier to bring Serbia the benefits of the civilization which it had established already in Bosnia.

But the world's history is a record of the unexpected. To the surprise of all observers, Serbia, under King Peter, made a wonderful recovery. The government was placed in the hands of the Radical party, and the sovereign strictly adhered to his rôle of constitutional ruler. By degrees the chaos of interests that at first surrounded the throne was reduced to order. Sound finance and the expanding economic life of the nation enabled the State to have 30,000,000 francs in hand by 1909. The reform of the army and of the state monopolies was begun. The country's

mineral wealth began to attract foreign capital. And the high school of Belgrade, with its 406 students in 1900, had become by 1911 a university with 1,100 members.

The critical moment, when a new departure in national policy was made, occurred in 1905. In order to break the barriers of Austro-Hungarian control the Serbian government in that year opened negotiations with Bulgaria with a view to a commercial treaty, by which the tariff duties between the two States should be abolished. Serbia and Bulgaria would thus form a single extended market, to the great benefit of merchants and importers in both countries. But Austria-Hungary looked with disfavour on any approach to co-operation amongst the Balkan States. It was her policy to keep them apart, and she had no intention of allowing Serbia to develop an independent economic life. As her commercial treaty with Serbia was drawing to a close, she threatened not to continue it unless the proposed agreement with Bulgaria were cancelled. Soon after she also insisted that the order for guns, which the Serbian government had placed with the French arsenal of Creusot, should also be cancelled, and the contracts for artillery and railway material given to Austrian firms. The situation was a serious one for the Serbian cabinet. The Austro-Hungarian commercial treaty was the foundation of Serbia's foreign trade. Nearly 90 per cent. of her exports went to the Dual Monarchy. If it were not continued and if the frontier were closed to Serbian products, ruin might follow. But the Serbian government were determined to make a bid for freedom. Despite the presence of troops massed along the frontier, it refused to agree to Austria-Hungary's demands. Then between the great Central Empire and her little neighbour began the strenuous tariff struggle called the ' Pig-War ', after Serbia's

chief article of export. For more than two years the frontier was closed, and, seeing that the Bulgarian Treaty had fallen through, Austria-Hungary was at first confident that her presumptuous opponent would be obliged to sue for terms. But the Serbian Minister of Commerce, M. Stojanovitch, supported by his colleagues, by the Skupshtina, and by the whole people, who showed a rare practical intelligence, was able to defeat these hopes by deflecting Serbian exports into new channels. The cereals were sent down the Danube, the live stock and meat by the railway through Turkey to Salonika. Reductions in the railway-freights enabled Serbian commerce to reach new markets in Germany, Belgium, Italy, France, and Egypt. At the close of 1906 the revenue from customs had hardly fallen, and Serbia had found customers who offered better terms than she had ever enjoyed before.

Meanwhile, the French guns were ordered and French companies undertook the Serbian railway construction. The only persons who had been badly hit by the 'Pig-War' were the consumers of Vienna and Buda-Pesth, no longer able to purchase their Serbian bacon. Though the Hungarian agriculturists were not sorry to see a redoubtable competitor excluded from their country, the general public of the empire did not hide its resentment. In the end it was Austria-Hungary who asked for economic peace, and in 1910, for the first time, she signed a treaty of commerce with Serbia on terms of equality.

Serbia had achieved a notable triumph. Whereas a few years before she had seemed on the point of dissolution, she had now carried a struggle against overwhelming odds to a successful issue. But her statesmen knew that her position was none too sure, none too satisfactory. The

exports that followed the line of the Danube had to perform a long journey to reach the markets of North-Western Europe. The live stock on its southern journey had to pass through a country of insanitary conditions and 'comitadji' activity, to be embarked at Salonika, a port unsuited to such traffic, and then to voyage round Greece to its final destinations. The Italo-Turkish War of 1911 had the effect of stopping almost completely the Serbian sea-borne trade. Meanwhile, Austria-Hungary was using every means to prevent the opening of a railway between the Danube and the Adriatic (the compensation promised to Serbia at the time of the annexation of Bosnia-Hertzegovina in 1908), and vigorously pursuing her policy of isolating Serbia from possible allies. Despite increasing prosperity and restored national confidence Serbian statesmen were obliged to turn their thoughts to some permanent method of assuring national independence and security from the attack that was ever threatening on the northern frontier. Above all, their desire was for a strip of sea-coast, that 'window looking on to the Adriatic' which should throw the world open to their countrymen; and also for the increase of their resources in wealth and population by the deliverance of the Serbs who still remained in Turkey. For these ends they were glad soon after to enter the league of the Balkan States.

But besides turning their eyes longingly to possible future expansion, the patriots of Serbia set themselves to the work of national regeneration within. The lack of internal history between 1903 and 1913 is a proof of the steady and quiet work that was being achieved. The king himself, by his tact, modesty, and unimpeachably constitutional behaviour, set the example of withdrawing Serbia from the painful publicity of the European limelight in which she

had previously figured to her own discredit. The need for national unity, preparedness, and education called into existence a society named the ' Narodna Odbrana ' (National Defence), which was but the most conspicuous of several patriotic associations aiming by instruction, sports, and gymnastic exercises at the general improvement of the people. The ' Narodna Odbrana ' had, as its special objects, the equipping and training of volunteers for military service in support of the regular army, and the awakening of national consciousness by any available means. It is pretty certain that the society carried on propaganda among the Serbs beyond the Bosnian frontier, an activity which was brought to an end officially by the annexation of Bosnia-Hertzegovina to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Serbia saw at the time of that crisis that she could not hope to fight on behalf of the annexed provinces with any chance of success. She promised, therefore, so to direct her policy as to live on terms of friendship with Austria-Hungary. The ' Narodna Odbrana ' came to an end, but was succeeded by another society called ' The New Narodna Odbrana ', whose task was to co-ordinate the existing associations on a wholly private and unofficial basis. The new society avowedly aimed at preparing the Serbs to resist a second blow like the annexation of Bosnia-Hertzegovina, such as an Austrian advance into Macedonia or Old Serbia. A pamphlet describing the society's work contained the following passage : ' It is an error to assert that Kossovo is past and gone. We find ourselves in the midst of Kossovo. Our Kossovo of to-day is the gloom and ignorance in which our people live. The other causes of the new Kossovo live on the frontiers to the North and West : the Germans, Austrians, and " Schwabas ", with their onward pressure against our Serbian and Slavonic

South.'[1] The New Narodna Odbrana was not a secret society, nor was it an official organization enjoying State assistance or recognition. It did not aim at offensive action over the frontier, though doubtless some of its members carried on anti-Austrian intrigues with the Serbs of the empire. Its purpose was defensive, to prepare the people for a combat which seemed certain to be thrust upon them.

The reason why such a clash appeared inevitable was that Serbia had begun to assume a second aspect besides that of internal recovery. The rising prestige of the kingdom, combined with the disaffection among the Southern Slavs of Austria-Hungary, caused her to become the natural centre and focus of Slav national feeling in all the neighbouring provinces. What Piedmont had been to Italy, it was hoped that Serbia would be to a future Yugoslavia. We must, therefore, leave the course of events in Serbia to consider the growth of a wider movement beyond her frontiers, a movement in which she had at first little or no part, but into which she drifted by reason of her character as the home of independence in the midst of the divided and helpless portions of the Southern Slav race.

[1] *Diplomatic Documents*, p. 478, Austro-Hungarian Red Book, Appendix 2.

4

Yugoslavia

Bez sloge nema slobode.
'Without union there is no liberty.'

During the first decade of the twentieth century it became clear that the various sections of the Southern Slav race in the Habsburg Empire had begun once more to aspire to that unity which they had never possessed, but for which they had made occasional efforts. Napoleon united a large portion of the race in his short-lived Illyria. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century the language-reforms of the Serb Karadjitch, the Croat Gai, and the Slovene Vraz, drew the three families of Slavs into a common intellectual and spiritual life. Bishop Strossmayer, by his nobility of character, his brilliant intellectual gifts, his wide sympathies, and his powerful influence, towered above the differences that kept the Southern Slavs apart. His foundation of the Yugoslav Academy at Zagreb in 1867 and of Zagreb University in 1874 provided a centre for the dissemination of unionist ideas, even the Roman Catholic clergy becoming champions of co-operation with the Orthodox Serbs.

In 1848, when the Hungarians rose in rebellion against the Austrian emperor, the Southern Slavs threw in their lot with the Habsburg monarchy, to which they trusted for deliverance from Buda-Pesth. The Croats and the Serbs of southern Hungary fought together for a common Slavonic ideal, and it was the Orthodox Patriarch of Karlovtzi who

solemnly installed the Ban of Croatia and embraced him before the enthusiastic multitude. In all this there was no serious thought of separation from Austria. Centuries of war against the Moslems in the service of the emperor had bred a traditional devotion to the House of Habsburg amongst the Southern Slavs. It was against the Magyar upstarts that their resentment was kindled. What they hoped for was freedom and union under the emperor. But the reign of Franz Joseph brought them nothing but disappointment and betrayal. No sooner had the monarchy crushed the Magyars with the help of the Serbo-Croats than reaction to a centralized bureaucratic system followed. The special privileges of the triune kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia were abolished in 1850. Worse followed in 1867, when the monarchy took its modern dual form of Austria-Hungary. The Southern Slavs were now divided, the Dalmatians and the Slovenes forming Austria's share and the rest going to Hungary. Croatia and Slavonia received Home Rule with a parliament of their own, subordinate to that of Buda-Pesth, but the Ban or governor is appointed by the Hungarian government, and Riyeka (Fiume), the great Croatian port, has been formed into a separate unit under another official of the Magyars. The last quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed a certain reaction against Southern Slav unity. In Dalmatia the Slavs received better treatment after Austria had lost her Italian possessions. Serbia was disunited and discredited, while in the centre of ' Yugoslavia ' Bosnia and Hertzegovina lay prostrate under the draconian rule of their governor, Kalay.

It was the Hungarian treatment of Croatia that chiefly caused the revival of the Southern Slav movement. While

the aristocratic caste that governs Hungary continued to pose before Europe as the champions of national liberty, it proceeded systematically to violate the privileges of the Croats by imposing the Magyar language upon them wherever possible. The system of Hungarian railways was so arranged as completely to cut off direct communication between Dalmatia or Bosnia and Croatia. Dalmatia, in this respect, is indeed worse off than in the Middle Ages, for the old trade-routes have long fallen into disuse and no others have taken their places. Freights were juggled so as to make it cheaper to transport goods from Buda-Pesth to Riyeka than from Croatian towns to the same port. In general the policy of successive Hungarian governments has been to aim at the suppression of Croat and Serbian, as well as Roumanian and Slovak, nationality, and artificially to create a single unitary Magyar state and people.

It is remarkable that in their struggle against Buda-Pesth the Southern Slavs should not have received any support from the emperor, whose throne they had helped to save in 1848 and to whose army they have for centuries contributed some of the bravest and most trustworthy troops. But Franz Joseph, the incarnation of the Habsburg tradition, lived in a closed circle of ideas, out of which nothing but dire necessity could draw him. Amongst these ideas three principal traditions stand out prominently. First, the imperial family tradition, implying the divine right of the Habsburgs to the most exalted secular position on earth, their feudal relations with the noble houses of the empire, and their absolute authority over those plebeians, like the Serbs, who have no aristocracy. The weakness of Austria after 1866, the strength of the Magyar magnates and their understanding with Prussia, were the motive causes that forced the emperor to agree to

Hungarian self-government. But he merely yielded to necessity when it was evident that only by such means could the Habsburg inheritance be strengthened to resist further shocks. The less powerful Slav peoples, who could not seriously threaten, and could only put forward claims on the gratitude of, the dynasty, were treated as pariahs in their own country, where they had lived for more than ten centuries.

A second tradition of the past to which Franz Joseph was heir was that of the crusade of Western Christendom against the barbarous, non-Christian, or at any rate non-Catholic, East. The original meaning of the word 'Austria' is the 'East kingdom', the eastern bulwark of Western Europe. Nobly the House of Habsburg and its subject peoples have discharged their function of holding back the Turk from the heart of Europe. And while they presented an unconquerable front to Islam, the emperors also successfully set themselves to stamp out heresy in their own dominions. When the tide of invasion turned and the Austrian state spread eastward to the Carpathians, the emperors found themselves confronted with Orthodox Christian subjects, whom they tolerated indeed, but whom they considered themselves bound to lead into the true fold of Rome. With the Serbs, who were not merely a crowd of vulgar peasants, but also schismatic from the Western Church, Franz Joseph could have no sympathy. And the Croats, although devotedly Roman Catholic, were suspect on account of their racial affinity to the Orthodox Serbs.

But if Franz Joseph was the chief surviving exponent of mediaeval and feudal monarchy and the hereditary secular champion of the pope, he was also thirdly a German prince. He began his reign as the leading and presiding sovereign

of the Germanic Confederation. Even after 1866, when Prussia brusquely ordered Austria out of Germany and herself assumed the guidance of the new confederation, Franz Joseph did not forget that he was a German, nor at first abandon the hope of recovering the position which he had lost. After the formation of the Triple Alliance, when he buried the past and entered into close friendship with Prussia, he continued to champion the cause of Germanism in the East. Austria had been the eastern outpost of Catholicism; but she had been also the vanguard of Germany conquering the Magyars, Poles, Ruthenes, Czechs, Roumanians, and Southern Slavs, and extending to them the benefits of German civilization. After 1867 the German character of the empire was compromised by the elevation of the Magyars to equality of power. But the compromise was extended no further than was absolutely necessary. The Magyars were admitted to the German fold and became a privileged nation. But the millions of Slavs and Latins, who lay like a ring round the outskirts of the Dual Monarchy and who formed the majority of its population, were still regarded as semi-civilized savages whose natural lot was to subserve the interests of the German race.

Oppressed by the Magyars and unable to awaken the sympathy of Vienna, the Southern Slavs at last began once more to draw together and to demand the recognition of their united nationality. The decisive date that marks the re-birth of the movement is 1903. In that year King Peter Karageorgevitch inaugurated the revival of Serbia and the end of Serbian dependence on Austria-Hungary. In Bosnia the year was marked by the death of Kalay, who had governed with a rod of iron since the rebellion of 1882. In Croatia the obnoxious Ban Khuen-Hodervary, who had carefully

fomented rivalry between Croats and Serbs, was removed from his office. On every side the influences that had stifled Southern Slav life seemed to be withdrawn. The divided portions of the race approached each other, realizing that in union was their only hope of successful resistance to the foreigner. On October 2, 1905, forty Croatian deputies of the parliaments of Croatia, Dalmatia, and Istria met at Riyeka to discuss their policy. The result of their conference was that, while accepting the union of Croatia with Hungary, they determined to agitate for real autonomy and civil freedom, and the restoration of the united triune kingdom. But they went further and extended the right hand of fellowship to the Serbian political parties, calling on them to join in the national unity. The Serbs were not slow to respond. On October 16 twenty-six Serbian deputies met at Zadar (Zara) and endorsed the policy of their Croatian brothers. The outcome of these meetings was the Serbo-Croat coalition, which now entered on an unequal struggle with the governments of Vienna and Buda-Pesth.

The new united party, the centre of whose activities was the Parliament of Zagreb, determined to make common cause with the Hungarian Opposition at Buda-Pesth. Their overtures were accepted effusively. 'We greet our Croatian and Dalmatian brothers,' said Francis Kossuth, the Magyar Opposition leader, 'and remind the Croats that we have always shared with them the rights which we had won for ourselves.'[1] Sixteen months later, in the spring of 1907, the leaders of the Hungarian Opposition were in office, and the time had come for them to redeem their pledge to the Southern Slavs. But the unreal and factious character

[1] Seton-Watson, *Southern Slav Question*, p. 148.

of that Opposition now became evident. They showed themselves to be Magyar persecutors when in power, and apostles of liberty only so long as they were called upon to talk and not to act. Kossuth himself brought in a railway Bill enforcing the use of the Magyar language on all the Croatian railways. The Serbo-Croat coalition did its utmost by obstruction in the Hungarian Parliament to save the official use of their language in their own country, but the hateful measure was forced through by their late friends and allies.

The Serbo-Croats then settled down to open war with Buda-Pesth. Their deputies left the Hungarian Parliament and the coalition government at Zagreb resigned. The answer to this challenge was the appointment of Baron Rauch to be Ban of Croatia in December 1907. The new Ban came expressly charged with the task of breaking the Serbo-Croat coalition. The contest began from the moment of his arrival in Zagreb. Parliament being dissolved a general election was necessary, and was held at the end of February 1908 Croatia enjoys the narrowest franchise in Europe. In addition to that, Baron Rauch brought all the influence of the State to bear on the electors. Officials were forbidden to vote for the Opposition candidates. Force and fraud were employed to secure returns satisfactory to the government. Despite every disadvantage, however, the coalition won fifty-seven seats in a House of eighty-eight. This triumph of the Southern Slavs was intolerable to their Magyar masters. Hardly had the new Parliament been elected when on March 14 it was indefinitely prorogued. A violent press campaign was everywhere opened, denouncing the Serbo-Croats as disloyal and separatist, unfit for equal rights with the Germans and Magyars. Hitherto there had been no question of disloyalty to the empire. The Southern Slavs

had only been asking for those rights of union and self-government that had historically been secured to them under the Habsburg crown. But the increasing bitterness of the struggle for those privileges did now indeed force them to look more towards the land of Southern Slav independence. Austro-Magyar oppression began to drive Zagreb and Belgrade into each other's arms.

This process was hastened and completed by the bullying and the blunders of the new director of Austro-Hungarian foreign policy. Count Goluchowski, a statesman of the milder and more liberal Austrian type, had been succeeded in October 1906 by Baron von Aerenthal. Aerenthal might be described by that odious word 'hustler'. Unhampered by any considerations of morality in public affairs, he was the determined exponent of that *Realpolitik*, or policy of brute force, which German statesmen have held up to the admiration of an unthinking world. He set out to do for Austria-Hungary what Bismarck had done for Prussia. Like his exemplar, he would restore the dimmed prestige of his country and make her a leading Power in the world by a judicious blend of military aggression and calculated falsehood. The condition of Europe seemed propitious. None knew better than Aerenthal the exhausted state of the Russian Empire after the war with Japan. He had himself been for many years ambassador at Petrograd, and in that capacity had helped to push Russia into the disastrous campaign in Manchuria. Russia would for some years be in no condition to oppose the eastward advance of Austria-Hungary. For France and Great Britain the new minister entertained only dislike and contempt. As an orthodox German he believed France to be decadent and unable to play a leading part in Europe, while we can imagine the lofty disdain which, as a member of a

military nobility, he must have felt for the commercial and industrial democracy of Britain. Under his guidance Austria-Hungary was no longer to be a 'brilliant second' to Germany, as the Kaiser William had somewhat contemptuously called her. She would herself take the initiative and display the vitality that was still in her.

If the Habsburg monarchy was to embark on a policy of expansion its obvious route lay to the south-east. An aggressive move in that direction would be a suitable reply to the Anglo-Russian *entente* of 1907. Further, it would perhaps rouse Serbia to some act of folly, and Aerenthal would seize the opportunity to crush the troublesome little State which barred the way to Salonika. The definitive annexation of Bosnia-Hertzegovina, which Austria-Hungary had administered 'on behalf of the Sultan' since 1878, would achieve Aerenthal's object; and the Young Turk revolution of 1908 decided him not to delay his *coup*. There was the danger that the administered provinces would insist on their right to participate in the new Turkish constitution. On the other hand it would be well, by conferring separate constitutional privileges on them, to show the world that the 'Bosniaks' were as well off as the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire; and to keep them in order under their new institutions it would be necessary for the Habsburgs to be undisputed masters. Hence the annexation.

The measure was carried out in evident collusion with Ferdinand of Bulgaria. On October 5 the independent kingdom of Bulgaria was proclaimed, followed two days later by the annexation of Bosnia-Hertzegovina to the Habsburg Empire. Both declarations violated the Treaty of Berlin, and protests were not lacking. The Young Turks had hardly found themselves in power when their promises of a renewed

and powerful Turkey were heavily discounted by the loss of suzerainty over two countries of six million inhabitants. But the Turkish government could no nothing. It was in no position to make war. The Powers well knew that, despite the Treaty of Berlin, Bulgarian independence and Austro-Hungarian possession of Bosnia were really long-established facts. None of them were anxious to fight over clauses which had been, with the full approval of Europe, a dead letter for thirty years. Also the Young Turks were as much under German tutelage as Abdul Hamid had been. So they eventually pocketed their pride and a financial indemnity.

The matter did not end there. The annexation touched Serbia very much more closely than it touched Turkey. The government of Constantinople lost two distant provinces, with which it had long ceased to have any dealings, and a population which was alien in race and mostly alien in sympathy. But Serbia saw the very centre of the Yugoslav peoples, which she had always hoped against hope to liberate, finally handed over to the rule of the Austro-Magyars, who had already done their best to denationalize the inhabitants. It is no wonder that, just as Aerenthal expected, the Serbs were indignant and clamoured for war. Who was the emperor and what was his precious empire that neighbouring peoples must be carved up and divided for his ambitious purposes ? Had not his armies been defeated every time that they had engaged in war ? As Spain to England in the days of Elizabeth, Austria-Hungary appeared in the eyes of the Serbian military enthusiasts to be no more than ' a colossus stuffed with clouts '. The new Serbian army, the product of King Peter's fostering care, would roll this colossus in the dust and make him relinquish his hold on the

Serbian lands. So shouted the wilder spirits of Belgrade. But prudent counsels prevailed. A private quarrel between Austria-Hungary and Serbia could only result in the latter's humiliation, perhaps in her loss of independence. The circumstances of the annexation pointed to an agreement between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, which would bring down an enemy on Serbia's rear in the event of war. And Serbia could find no outside support. Great Britain and Russia both protested against the annexation, and had Russia been willing to fight over it, the resentment of Turkey and Italy might possibly have brought those two countries to Serbia's side. But the threat of German intervention was too much for Russia. When the German emperor stepped forward and informed the Tsar that in case of war he would stand by Austria-Hungary as 'a friend in shining armour', Russia withdrew her protest and strongly advised Serbia to submit to the inevitable. Great Britain could hardly take the Slav cause upon herself, and therefore proffered the same advice. On March 31, 1909, Serbia swallowed the bitter pill and addressed a Note to Austria-Hungary in which she declared that 'Serbia recognizes that the *fait accompli* regarding Bosnia has not affected her rights'; and that 'in deference to the advice of the Great Powers, Serbia undertakes to renounce from now onwards the attitude of protest and opposition which she has adopted with regard to the annexation since last autumn.'[1]

The crisis of October 1908 to March 1909 thus ended in a triumph for Aerenthal. He had shown that there was still life in the old empire which he served. In the trial of strength the Central Empires had forced the Anglo-Franco-Russian Entente to eat humble pie. Still the Entente had

[1] *Diplomatic Documents*, p. 4, British Correspondence, No. 4.

stood together. Though unwilling to plunge Europe into a general war over a matter of form, they had shown that their interests were united. They had even had a modicum of support from Italy, who had insisted that Austria-Hungary should now withdraw from the Sandjak of Novi Pazar. They had submitted, but it was doubtful if they would take another aggressive move so complacently. If the Germanic Powers proved content with their victory, and did not attempt any further Balkan *coups*, all would be well. But of that many competent judges had little hope. A Viennese newspaper, a month after the annexation, had announced 'We have missed an excellent opportunity. When our monitors were near the Serbian capital, we ought to have seized the town. . . . The conflict with Serbia and Montenegro is inevitable. The longer we postpone it, the dearer it will cost us.'[1] Prophetic words! Serbia too thought the struggle inevitable in view of Austria-Hungary's ambitions. She saw herself threatened with a continual menace and unsupported by any allies prepared for war. Taking counsel of her courage, she made ready for 'the day', resolved at least to die honourably and to perish rather than surrender the liberty achieved at the cost of so much blood and effort.

As for Bosnia-Hertzegovina, the continued protest of the inhabitants against the Austro-Hungarian occupation was maintained with even greater vigour and unity than before the annexation. The government ever since 1878 has done its utmost to foster internal discord and to set the three religious bodies—Roman Catholic Croats, Orthodox Serbs, and Mohammedans—against each other. The country was not allowed to develop. So wretched has the poverty been that in some parts the peasant families have been obliged to drag

[1] Quoted in Denis, p. 204.

the plough themselves for lack of oxen. The miserable Turkish land-system was kept in force to propitiate the Mussulmans (rightly considered less dangerous enemies than the Serbs), although at the Congress of Berlin it had been arranged that the settlement of the agrarian question should be the first duty of the Austro-Hungarian government, acting on behalf of Europe. Hoping for the fulfilment of this reform, the 600,000 *kmeti*, or serfs, who work the land for the benefit of some 40,000 Mohammedan *agas*, looked forward to freeing themselves by purchasing their farms, and consequently they were careful not to make the soil produce too much lest the selling-price should rise. Thus from year to year the vicious circle was followed. The land did not produce her fruits because the peasants always anticipated economic freedom, and the government complained of the ungrateful obstinacy of the people in not taking advantage of the benefits of civilization. The railways, instead of being made to encourage commerce, were built primarily for strategic purposes, and have been of little value to the agricultural producers. Public instruction was grossly neglected or given in an unknown tongue. The result has been that the illiterates in Bosnia number 90 per cent. of the population, one of the highest figures in Europe. This does not trouble the Mohammedans, who are for the most part indifferent to education; but the Serbian community struggled to maintain schools by private subscriptions, many of which were suppressed by the government. Any dealings with Serbia were so penalized that exports to that country, which in 1884 totalled 388,046 francs, and represented a large decrease from the figures for 1879, had fallen by 1900 to 40,888 francs.[1] The two provinces were, in fact, treated as a savage colony

[1] Stojanovitch, p. 176.

in whose welfare the government had no interest, and which was only useful as part of a strategical advance towards the south-east.

The grant of a constitution did not alter this condition of affairs. The new Sabor, or Parliament, whose constituencies were so based on religious differences as to give the Croats an unfair advantage, had few of the powers of a true legislative assembly. Its president, appointed by the emperor, has almost absolute authority in the sessions. It cannot concern itself with the tariff or with military burdens. It cannot pass any laws without the sanction of the Austro-Hungarian Dual government. It cannot exercise any check on the governor of the provinces. Indeed the political system is more autocratic than before 1908, for the office of civil assistant to the military governor has been suppressed and the supreme authority is that of the commander-in-chief. The Sabor has protested against its own powerlessness but without effect, for the revision of the constitution is placed beyond its competence. After resisting for two years the Sabor's demand for land-purchase on behalf of the peasants, the government sanctioned a scheme of purchase to be applied only when there was agreement between the *Aga* and his *kmeti*. Obviously this would not help on matters much. Also a Viennese professor calculated that under the scheme in question the last of the Bosnian *kmeti* could not be emancipated till the year 2025.

The visitor in Bosnia-Hertzegovina is not made aware of the sympathies of the population. He sees the well-kept streets of Sarajevo ; he enjoys the unexpected comfort and cleanliness of the hotels which have been built for him ; he is aware of the good order maintained by the numerous police and military. But underneath this fair exterior, and

not mentioned to the stranger from motives of prudence, is the unceasing resentment of a people who know themselves to be exploited by their foreign masters. The murder at Sarajevo, on June 28, 1914, was but the climax of many acts of protest illustrating the aspirations of the people and their helplessness.

Aerenthal had set himself to break down the Southern Slav barrier that offered its passive resistance to the aggression of Austro-Magyar imperialism. The *coup* of the annexation had been brilliantly successful and had done its work of humiliating Serbia and convincing many observers that Southern Slav unity could only be achieved under the apparently irresistible power of the empire. But his plans went further. To serve as a pretext for the annexation it must be shown that the lawful authority of Austria-Hungary, based on European treaties, had been in danger from the intrigues of Serbia. Aerenthal wished to be able to hold up Serbia to the obloquy of the world as the disturber of the peace and the author of sedition and conspiracy in all the Southern Slav lands. With that character fixed upon the government of Serbia, it would be his pleasant task to uproot Yugoslav agitation in the empire by persecution, and finally to suppress Serbian independence. The open violence of the annexation was, therefore, only an incident in a campaign of cunning intrigue.

The first Serbian 'iniquity' exposed is known as 'the Tsetinye plot'. It is of interest on account of the exposer rather than in itself; for the accusations could not be proved, and depended for their efficacy on the persistent survival of scandal, however ill founded. In November 1907 a person of the suitable name of Nastitch, whom even Professor Friedjung, the advocate of official imperial views, described

as a man whom one could only touch with tongs, gave evidence at Tsetinye of a supposed Serbian plot to blow up Prince Nicholas's palace. Nastitch's character is illustrated by the fact that he had been prosecuted for stealing opera-glasses in a Viennese theatre, and was afterwards shown to be in the pay of the police of Sarajevo. It had also been observed that on one occasion he had started the cry 'Long live King Peter!' in a crowded street. For this offence he had been fined 200 crowns, which he never paid, whereas others who had followed his lead were imprisoned. This pleasing individual now asserted that the plot which he was exposing was the work of Prince George of Serbia, and had the approval of King Peter, Prince Nicholas's son-in-law. Amongst other details it appeared that the young prince had chosen for the explosion a date when his only sister was staying in the palace with her grandparents.

Despite the absurdity of the charge, the Tsetinye plot attained its object. The suspicions of the old Prince of Montenegro, whose relations with his son-in-law had been far from cordial, were roused, and for some time the two Serbian States were completely estranged. But besides this a vague suspicion of foul play rested on the Serbian dynasty in the minds of the European public. The murder of Alexander and Draga was recalled; and Serbia's enemies could rhetorically demand 'of what barbarism might not these Serbs be capable?'

Nastitch was again the purveyor of the next 'exposure' of Serbian intrigues.[1] In July 1908, as a preparation for the annexation of Bosnia, he published a pamphlet entitled 'Finale', in which he gave numerous names and details connected with a widespread revolutionary movement in the

[1] For the details that follow see Seton-Watson, *Southern Slav Question.*

Southern Slav lands. The whole conspiracy, it appeared, was being engineered by a political club of Belgrade, the *Slovenski Yug* (Slavonic South), with the support of King Peter and his government.

At once numerous arrests were made amongst the Serbs of Croatia. Finally, fifty-three persons were kept in custody, without examination or even information as to the nature of their offence. As was anticipated, this procedure aroused furious indignation in Serbia, which was further inflamed by the annexation. Had the Serbs gone to war there can be little doubt that the unfortunate prisoners, as well as many other well-known Serbs, would have remained in prison or been executed. It would have been impossible to disprove Nastitch's fabricated evidence, and the truth would never have come to light. Our knowledge of what happened in 1908–9 must make us fear that Austria-Hungary achieved to the full in 1914–15 the judicial crimes and gross injustices which she failed to carry out six years before.

The proceedings eventually started in March 1909, presumably because it then became clear that war with Serbia could not be forced on by the continued imprisonment of the accused. The court at Zagreb was presided over by an obscure lawyer whose name, Tarabocchia, corresponded admirably with his notoriously convivial habits. The only evidence produced of the seditious relations of the prisoners with Serbia was Nastitch's pamphlet. But that did not matter. The slightest hint of sympathy with things Serbian was good enough evidence for this extraordinary court. The use of the Cyrillic alphabet was guaranteed to the Serbs of the Hungarian kingdom, and was obligatory in the schools of those districts where there was a Serbian majority among the inhabitants. Nevertheless, it was now held to be highly sus-

picious and indicative of sympathy with Pan-Serb propaganda. If the prisoners had spoken of themselves or their fellow nationals as 'Serbs' or their church as 'Serb Orthodox', that too raised a presumption of guilt, although these names had been sanctioned by two centuries of official use. The defendants were even held responsible for anti-annexationist articles which had appeared in the Serbo-Croat press of America long after their imprisonment, on the ground that the newspapers in question were the outcome of societies and clubs to which the defendants belonged. But many of the accusations were even more fantastic. A villager was charged with having asserted that the Blessed Virgin Mary was a Serb. A shopkeeper was condemned for having in his possession a supply of dynamite, though he was able to show that he had official permission to use it for blasting in a country district. The possession of the King of Serbia's portrait was, of course, a clear proof of guilt. A certain Krizhnyak was represented as declaring that he had seen 'Long live Peter Karageorgevitch' written up in the house of a man called Gayitch. Yet it appeared that Krizhnyak could neither read nor write. The following dialogue, too, is sufficiently laughable. President of the court: 'You trod on a dog's tail, and when the dog howled you said, "How that Croat whines!"' Accused: 'In the first place, the dog had no tail. Secondly, it is untrue that I called the dog a Croat.' President: 'But the witnesses all say you did.' Accused: 'I only asked "Is the dog a Croat, I wonder, as you make out there are only Croats in Croatia?" The question was a joke.'[1]

But there were darker features about the trial. Proofs were submitted in the Croatian Parliament, and never denied, that

[1] Seton-Watson, p. 189.

Nastitch, the principal witness, had been paid for his evidence by the Prefect of Police at Zagreb, and that on the eve of his examination he had been instructed by the magistrates how he should reply to certain questions which would be put to him. Further, counsel for the defence suffered the most intolerable treatment at the hands of the police. Two of them, M. Hinkovitch and M. Budisavlyevitch, visited Belgrade in the course of the proceedings in order to obtain information with which to support their case. They called at the Austro-Hungarian Legation and were assured that the authorities had no objection to their activities. Their mission fulfilled, they returned. M. Hinkovitch, who was the first to leave Serbia, had no sooner arrived in Hungary than he found his valise had been stolen. Some months later it was returned to him with the lock forced. But the thieves had not secured what they evidently sought, for M. Hinkovitch had confided the notes and memoranda made in Belgrade to a friend who had carried them across the frontier in safety. M. Budisavlyevitch was not so fortunate. On his arrival at Zimun he was arrested and searched. His notes were found on him and confiscated. Soon after these notes were triumphantly produced in court by the prosecution. Most of the subject-matter, which was entirely favourable to the prisoners, had been suppressed, and the remainder carefully edited and twisted into a form prejudicial to the defence.

The Zagreb trial dragged wearily on during seven months, and only came to an end in October 1909. A judgement of startling severity, though not out of keeping with the illegalities of the trial, followed. Thirty-one of the prisoners were found guilty of high treason, and condemned to penal servitude for periods varying from five to twelve years. An appeal was thereupon lodged against the decision, and M. Hinkovitch

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How Austria-Hungary retains the loyalty of the Yugoslavs

published his denunciation of the methods of the court, which he accused of the falsification of documents, the distortion or suppression of evidence, and indifference to all extenuating circumstances. The court of appeal quashed the sentence on the ground of 'considerable doubts as to the truth of the facts on which the judgement had been based. Legally the case ought now to have been re-opened or definitely dismissed. Yet neither course was followed. Month succeeded to month while the unfortunate prisoners remained in custody, until suddenly, in September 1910, the whole case was set aside by royal decree.

The reason for this extraordinary procedure, which neither condemned nor exonerated the accused, is to be found in another trial which had taken place meanwhile. On March 25, 1909, the very day on which it became known that Russia had accepted the annexation of Bosnia-Hertzegovina, there appeared in the *Neue Freie Presse* a sensational article called 'Austria-Hungary and Serbia', written by an eminent historian, Professor Friedjung. The burden of the learned doctor's argument was that Serbia was showing herself an impossible neighbour by her active intrigues against the Dual Monarchy. He stated and amplified all Nastitch's case, and accused the Serbo-Croat coalition party of having been bought by the Serbian government for the purpose of stirring up rebellion in the Southern Slav provinces. The article, in fact, reproduced all the recrimination which was then being rebutted in the Zagreb trial, and added information about a Serbian project for the erection of a league of Yugoslav republics (a plan that seems strangely out of keeping with King Peter's supposed complicity in the plot). What made it serious was the high reputation of Dr. Friedjung as a man of honour and sound learning, and his assertion that he

could produce irrefutable documentary evidence of the facts, figures, and names mentioned in his article. Consequently the accusations could not be allowed to pass unchallenged, and the deputies of the Serbo-Croat coalition collectively brought an action for libel against the author. Aerenthal, for reasons which we shall readily appreciate, was by now tired of the whole subject, and tried to get the matter settled out of court. But the deputies had reached the limit of their patience, while Dr. Friedjung was convinced of the truth of his assertions and of the patriotic nature of the services which he was performing in exposing a dangerous conspiracy. Both parties therefore insisted on a public decision of the issue.

The case came before the court in Vienna in December 1909, and the professor produced his documents, which it appeared were photographs of papers stolen from the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the club *Slovenski Yug*. They consisted of the minutes of the club, written by a certain Milan Stepanovitch (whose identity was a mystery, for no one answering to his description could be discovered), and of a few official papers, amongst which was a report addressed by the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, M. Spalaykovitch, to his chief, describing a political mission in Hungary and negotiations with certain members of the coalition. Dr. Friedjung explained that the original papers had been photographed in Belgrade and secretly restored to their owners, which explained the fact that they had never been missed. He insisted that they must be genuine, since he had received them from a quarter so exalted as to preclude all suspicion (a statement which was recognized as referring to Aerenthal and the heir to the throne himself, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand). But he had also examined them carefully and

was willing to stake his reputation as a scientific historian on their authenticity.

Yet when these precious documents were submitted for inspection by those who could read Serbian and knew anything of Serbian affairs, they only provoked outbursts of inextinguishable laughter. The egregious professor could not read a word of Serbian. Consequently he was unaware that the authors of the documents could not write that language. The papers consisted of clumsy renderings into Serbian, with German and Polish idioms literally translated. M. Spalaykovitch appeared in person and denied the authorship of the report attributed to him, pointing out in addition that the document referred to a loan which the Skupshtina was shortly to vote. The loan in question had been raised a year before, largely through the work of M. Spalaykovitch himself. Two experts, who were thereupon appointed to examine the report, confirmed the minister's evidence by declaring that the writer was undoubtedly ignorant of Serbian. The supposed minutes of the *Slovenski Yug* were guilty also of the oddest anachronism. The record of the meeting held on March 10, 1908, mentioned a vote of 6,000 dinars for use in 'the impending elections' in Croatia. The said elections had taken place less than a fortnight previously, at the end of February.

Professor Bozho Markovitch, the president of the *Slovenski Yug*, declared that the 'minutes' were a pure fabrication. Especially he pointed out that they represented him as presiding over a meeting on October 21, 1908, a date when he had actually been in Berlin. The court could satisfy themselves of the truth of his statement by addressing inquiries to the police of that city, and to the hotels at Vienna and Buda-Pesth in which he had stayed on the

journey. When, in addition to all the other exposures of the documents, there arrived from Berlin the German official confirmation of Professor Markovitch's *alibi*, the defence broke down. The government determined to prevent further discussion, and appealed to the Serbo-Croat deputies on grounds of patriotism and the prestige of the Monarchy not to press their suit any further. Dr. Friedjung read a public declaration apologizing for his mistake, and the prosecution was dropped. The anxiety of the government to reach an amicable settlement shows that they feared a decided verdict for the plaintiffs. If we are ready to recognize the impartiality of the Austrian court before which the case was tried, what are we to think of those exalted individuals who provided Dr. Friedjung with these ridiculous documents and then interfered with the course of justice to hush up a scandal ?

The whole affair was still wrapped in mystery, and might never have been cleared up had not one of the hidden actors in the drama entered the limelight in the autumn of 1910. This was a journalist named Vasitch, who had then just been arrested by the police of Belgrade for espionage. During his trial it appeared that he had been the unknown Milan Stepanovitch, who had drawn up Dr. Friedjung's ' minutes '. Then the whole truth came out. Vasitch had been engaged by M. Svientochowski, Secretary to the Austro-Hungarian Legation in Belgrade, as tutor for his children. While so employed he had been asked if he would like to earn much money for little work. He had then been given the originals of Dr. Friedjung's documents, written in Latin characters and in execrable Serbian. His job was to Serbicize them all, copy them out in the Cyrillic script, and forge the signatures of several persons. This he had done, though taking care

that his own version should no more be in accurate Serbian than that of his employers. The completed texts were then photographed; the originals which had been concocted in the legation were burned; and the photographs were forwarded to the Foreign Office in Vienna. Vasitch, evidently a cunning blackguard, had however succeeded in saving one or two of the originals from destruction and, after having used them for purposes of blackmail, he was now able to produce them in support of his statements. Professor Masaryk, the eminent Bohemian writer and politician (now in safety in England), took up the matter in the Imperial Delegations and added to the damning effect of Vasitch's confession. He showed that the originals were written on huge sheets of paper nearly a metre in length. Obviously no society carrying on delicate and criminal negotiations would commit their minutes to sheets of this size, even if they had the folly to keep any written record of their activities. On the other hand, paper of that size would be most convenient with a view to obtaining clear photographic negatives. There was also a telegram, supposed to have been sent from Loznitza, and used in support of Dr. Friedjung's case. Professor Masaryk was able to prove that this telegram was written not on the paper used for delivery by the Serbian postal service, but on the paper provided in post offices for the use of the public!

Vasitch was sentenced to five years' penal servitude. But the whole interest of his case was that he had explained the mystery of the Friedjung trial. Baron Forgach, Austro-Hungarian minister at Belgrade, was shown to have been employed in the fabrication of documents intended to inculpate the government to which he was accredited. Society at Belgrade did not know whether to be indignant at the

foulness of the plot or to dissolve into laughter at the complete discomfiture of the inexpert forger. In Austria-Hungary there was an explosion of wrath from all unfettered public opinion at the abominable iniquity of the government and its incredible clumsiness, which had made the empire the laughing-stock of Europe. But the Court and the government were unrepentant. Baron Forgach was held to have discharged his functions badly, but his whole crime consisted in having been found out. He was removed to be minister at Dresden, but shortly afterwards was recalled to Vienna to be Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. As it was in this capacity that he helped to draft the ultimatum to Serbia of July 23, 1914, Europe may be pardoned for disbelieving the reality of the grievances put forward in that document, until it be proved by the impartial tribunal of future historians.

Thus Aerenthal's endeavours to discredit Serbia and to fix the guilt of sedition on the Serbo-Croat coalition had ended in a complete fiasco. Instead of scotching the Yugoslav movement, he had enormously strengthened it. The attempt to drive a wedge between the Croats and the Serbs, and to persuade the Croats that they were being betrayed by their Serbian friends into a treasonable support of Serbia against the monarchy, only succeeded in showing to both parties alike that there was justice for none but Germans or Magyars in Austria-Hungary. Croatian barristers had defended the Serbian prisoners at Zagreb. Croatian politicians and organizations supported their cause. When the Zagreb trial showed the futility of the government's efforts, the whole Serbo-Croat coalition had endured the official wrath together. From that time the Yugoslav ideal was firmly established in the minds and hearts of Serbs

and Croats alike. Yugoslav unity made rapid strides in the domain of art, letters, and science, and resulted in the formation of many Serbo-Croato-Slovene societies. The van was led by the young Serbo-Croat progressive party, which held its first conference at Split (Spalato) in August 1911, and defined as its object ' the liberation and unification of all Southern Slavs into one single independent state '. Thus the persecution of pretended revolutionaries had produced real ones. But the hope that Yugoslav unity could be achieved under Serbia's leadership and apart from Austria-Hungary was even then not generally entertained. Serbia had still her reputation to make. The wars of 1912–13 showed her in a new light. Her victories roused all the Southern Slavs to the height of enthusiasm. If there were still many who distrusted her and put their hope in ' Trialism ' after 1913, the events of 1914 have effected the moral unification of the Yugoslavs. In the present war Serbia is the champion and spokesman of the Southern Slav race.

AUSTRIA - HUNGARY
ROUMANIA
BULGARIA
BOSNIA
HERZEGOVINA
DALMATIA
SERVIA
MONTENEGRO
ALBANIA
MACEDONIA
GREECE
TURKEY
ITALY
ADRIATIC SEA
BLACK SEA
AEGEAN SEA
SEA OF MARMORA
Trieste
ISTRIA
Zagreb
Riyeka
CROATIA
SLAVONIA
Save
Novi Sad
BATCHKA
SYRMIA
Zimun
BANAT
Bucharest
DOBRUDJA
Pola
Lussin
Banyaluka
Shabatz
Lozhnitza
Belgrade
Smederevo
Lazarevatz
Valyevo
Rudnik Mts.
Kragujevatzo
Zadan
Sarajevo
Kralyevo
Morava
Alexinatz
Timok
R. Danube
Sheberiko
Spalato
Krushevatzo
Kniayevatz
Batchik
Lissa
Nish
Pirot
Novi Pazar
Lescovatz
Slivratza
Balkan Mts.
Andreavitza
Mitrovitza
Sofia
Dubrovnik
Petch
Prishtina
Vranya
Ipek
Kustendil
R. Maritza
Cattaro
Scutari
Prizren
Kumanova
Skoplye
Adrianople
Midia
Constantinople
St. Stefano
Liesh
S.G. di Medua
Veles
Dibra
R. Shar
Strumitza
Rhodope Mts.
Durazzo
El Basan
Babuna Mts.
Prilep
Ochrida
Seres
Kavalla
Monastir
Vardar
Brindisi
Florina
Vodena
Salonika
Dedeagatch
Enos
Valona
Verria
Imbros
Mt. Athos
Limnos
Dardanelles
Otranto
Yannina
Corfu
THE
BALKANS
in 1914
Miles
0 20 40 60 80 100 120
Frontiers
Serbo-Bulgarian partition line 13.3.1912.

5

The Turkish War

Osvecheno Kossovo.
'Kossovo avenged.'

Consider the position in which Serbia stood in the early months of 1912. She was waiting for the blow which was certain to come from Austria-Hungary. If possible, it was clearly her policy to strengthen herself by reaching the sea, expanding her territory, and redeeming the Serbs in Turkey. For any such enterprise the co-operation of the other Balkan States would be necessary. A secret convention had indeed been signed between Serbia and Bulgaria as far back as 1909, but, despite this, most competent judges thought a Balkan League to be impossible. In 1911 the Grand Vizier had told an American writer that his time was too precious to waste in the discussion of such absurdities, and Hussein Hilmi Pasha, who knew Balkan politics if any one did, was certain that the Greeks and Bulgars could never march together. All the Christian states wished to deliver Macedonia from the Turk, but there their unanimity ended. Each wished for a larger share of the coveted province than the others would allow. The Turkish government counted on these rivalries to keep its enemies divided and mutually hostile.

But what seemed impossible was made possible by Turkey herself. Abdul Hamid was no longer Sultan. The threads of policy at Constantinople were in less cunning

hands. The Young Turks. who had been established in power since 1909, had introduced a new element into the government of the Ottoman Empire. No less arbitrary and corrupt than their autocratic predecessor, they could not make his appeal to religious sentiment. The Mohammedan inhabitants of the empire saw the central power no longer in the hands of a single God-appointed ruler, but put into commission among a set of westernized atheists and crypto-Jews. The Young Turks indeed took their stand on nationality rather than on religion as a bond of union. Announcing that religious liberty should be accorded to every creed, they called upon all races in the empire to be good Ottomans. But the old Turkish bureaucracy could not change its skin, nor the Mussulman his spots. When the Macedonian population were disarmed in 1910, there were numerous cases of the Turks not only not being relieved of their weapons, but even being supplied with rifles taken from the Christians. Race intolerance was but a new name for the old evil. The Turkish government looked with complaisance on the exodus of thousands of the healthiest elements of the Christian population of European Turkey, who preferred emigration to the new privilege of serving in the Turkish army. Their places would be taken by Mussulmans from Bosnia, who were welcomed, though confessedly dirty and lazy and unfamiliar with the Turkish language. Massacre was no more palatable to those who endured it because it was carried out in the name of national unity than it had been as the result of religious fanaticism. The unfortunate Armenians discovered in 1909 that the Young Turks could keep up Abdul Hamid's tradition in this respect. In 1910 followed a severe persecution of Greeks in the neighbourhood of Smyrna. This

acted as a spur to the government of Greece, which at this time, after a period of revolution and unrest, was under the capable guidance of M. Venizelos. That striking statesman had been summoned from his native Crete to be the saviour of the mother country. On his own island he had been a leader of guerrilla warfare, and had caused the withdrawal of Prince George of Greece from the post of High Commissioner. The differences of view between the Cretan statesman and the Greek Royal Family have presumably never been forgotten, and account to a large extent for the condition of affairs in the kingdom to-day. Yet in two years M. Venizelos worked a miraculous change in the country of his adoption. In 1912 Greece was not only united and internally peaceful, prosperous, and self-confident, but for the first time she had an army which made her a desirable ally, as well as a fleet that could control the Turkish coasts. M. Venizelos went further and succeeded in persuading his countrymen to join forces with their traditional enemy, Bulgaria.

Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria, who may be regarded as the chief director of the Balkan League, was anxious to use the Serbs and Greeks in his plans for ousting the Turk from Europe and assuming the hegemony of the Balkan peninsula. The increased vigour which the Young Turks were attempting to infuse into the failing system of the Ottoman Empire was disquieting to one who looked upon himself as the heir of that dying organism. He therefore approached the Serbian government, which was willing to make some abatements of its Macedonian claims in view of the opportunity to strike quickly before the Austro-Hungarian blow should fall. A conveniently-timed massacre of Macedonian Slavs near Shtip, which the Bulgars are strongly suspected of having provoked,

roused public opinion in Sofia to demonstrate in favour of war for the liberation of Macedonia.

The moment was good. Turkey, though still a formidable military Power, with German officers in charge of her army, was known to be divided in counsel and corrupt in administration. The Arabs and Albanians were in a state of chronic discontent. In fact it was an Albanian rising that upset the Government in July and caused the temporary return to power of a moderate cabinet under Kiamil Pasha. The irreligion of the Young Turks and the presence of Christians in the ranks had destroyed the old religious unity of the troops. Above all, Turkey was still engaged in her difficult task of fighting Italy in Tripoli across a sea patrolled by the Italian fleet.

The spring and summer of 1912 were therefore spent in drawing up the necessary treaties between the Balkan Allies and in securing the goodwill of the Powers. In April M. Venizelos saw the German emperor at his villa in Corfu, and the admirers of the Greek minister account it one of his great triumphs that he won the Kaiser's approval of the Balkan League. Whether the Emperor William expected the Balkan Allies to attack Turkey and to be victorious is another matter. Very probably he was convinced that the Turkish army was easily able to settle accounts with the Christian states. That was undoubtedly the view of Austria-Hungary. Count Berchtold had taken Aerenthal's place in the direction of policy at Vienna, and was likely to prefer diplomacy to war in the task of ruining Serbia. If Serbia joined the crusade for Macedonia she would inevitably be crushed, when it would be Austria-Hungary's pleasant duty to step in and protect the Serbs from the results of their own folly. Once in Serbia, Austria-Hungary

would not be dislodged, and her valuable civilizing powers might be extended to Albania, Macedonia, and ultimately to Salonika.

With Russia there was no difficulty. M. Hartwig, the Russian minister at Belgrade, had been working for some time to secure Serbo-Bulgarian co-operation, and any sign of Slav solidarity in the Balkans was bound to be welcome to his government. The Tsar, indeed, was invited to be guide, philosopher and friend to the two States, who agreed that he should be their arbiter in case of disagreement. France and Great Britain were remote, not keenly interested, and unmilitary. The Balkan League could therefore count on liberty of action.

In order to appreciate the main points of the Serbo-Bulgarian alliance, let us examine the gist of some of the clauses in the treaties of 1912, as published in *La Bulgarie* by a Serb calling himself 'Balcanicus'.[1] The first treaty was signed on March 13, 1912. Of this, the first clause bound either State to come to the assistance of the other, should that other be attacked by one or more enemies. The second clause bound either State to support the other should that other's interests be affected by the invasion of Turkish territory by any outside Power. The third clause established that neither State in the event of hostilities would make a separate peace.

To this treaty was added a secret *annexe*, the first clause of which enabled either State to announce when the moment for action had come. In case of a difference of opinion, the matter was to be settled by reference to Russian arbitration. The second clause was the vital one dealing with the territories which it was hoped would be the spoils of victory.

[1] Given also in Gueshoff, Appendix, pp. 112–33.

They consisted of Macedonia, with fringes of adjacent territory, such as Old Serbia, the Sandjak, northern Albania, and western Thrace. Bulgaria had been in favour of an autonomous Macedonia, which she could ultimately annex at a favourable opportunity. Consequently Serbia insisted on a partition, which plan was adopted in this clause. During the war the occupied territory was to be the joint property of the two allies, but within three months of the restoration of peace it was to be divided on the following lines. All the country to the east and south of the Struma river and the Rhodope mountains was guaranteed to Bulgaria. Similarly everything north and west of the Shar Planina range was to be as unquestionably Serbian. This left the great main block of Macedonia in the centre. Across this, a provisional frontier line was drawn from just north of Egri-Palanka in a south-westerly direction to Lake Ohrida. This line crossed the Vardar slightly above Veles and gave Bulgaria also the towns of Ohrida, Monastir, and Prilep. This settlement, however, was subject to revision by the Emperor of Russia, whose decision was to be final not only in this respect but also on any dispute arising out of the treaty, the annexe, or the military convention which followed. We may remark, in passing, that the uncertainty as to this division of territory was due to the fact that while Serbia claimed nothing south-east of the line, Bulgaria did not bind herself in the same way as regards the north-western side. Thus there remained a narrow strip of country including Skoplye, whose ultimate fate was not decided.

This treaty was followed by a military convention signed on July 1. The interesting point of the convention is that it mentions definite details as to numbers of troops and possible enemies. Bulgaria, as the leading partner in the

alliance, was to provide 200,000 men, Serbia 150,000. In the event of a Roumanian or a Turkish attack on Bulgaria, Serbia was to direct a force of not less than 100,000 men against the aggressor. On the other hand Bulgaria promised to support the Serbs with 200,000 men, should Austria-Hungary attack them or send troops into the Sandjak. Also, should Turkey attack Serbia, Bulgaria would detach 100,000 men to co-operate with her ally in the Macedonian theatre of war.

The Bulgarian engagement to fight Austria-Hungary in case of necessity is peculiarly interesting in view of a later statement by M. Daneff in the course of a speech in the Bulgarian Sobranje (Parliament) on May 18, 1914. The speaker, who was a minister at the time of the treaties, said that the military convention had not been fully known to him, but that no statesman in Bulgaria had ever supposed that their country would dream of making war on Austria-Hungary. The clause in question, he asserted, had been introduced for the purpose of showing the world at large the solidarity of the two allies, neither of whom expected Bulgaria actually to keep the letter of her undertaking. Yet later on Serbia did expect assistance from Bulgaria against Austria-Hungary over the Serbian conquest of the Adriatic coast, and complained that she did not receive it.[1] On this point Bulgaria proved herself to be an ally of very doubtful value.

Meanwhile, Greece also made her treaty with Bulgaria, followed by a military convention on the eve of war, by which she promised a force of 120,000 men and the invaluable services of her fleet. The question of possible Greek

[1] M. Daneff's speech and M. Gueshoff's telegram of January 17, 1913. Balcanicus, pp. 107–10.

and Bulgarian accessions of territory was, however, not settled. By clause 5 each of the two States undertook to make no armistice of more than 24 hours without the consent of her ally.

One more treaty. On September 28 the final Serbo-Bulgarian military convention laid down the plan of attack. The original plan had been that the Serbian army, advancing up the line of the Morava, should be supported at the head of the Vardar valley by three Bulgarian divisions coming from Kustendil. This was now altered. The Bulgarian army as a whole was to be thrown on the Maritza front to strike at Adrianople and Thrace. One division only was to remain at Kustendil and co-operate with one Serbian division to form the allied left wing in Macedonia.

Meanwhile, the Greek army was to advance northwards from Thessaly and take the Turkish Macedonian army in the rear, while the Montenegrins made a diversion in northern Albania and the Serbian secondary armies occupied the Sandjak. The Greek fleet, though on paper much weaker than the Turkish, was rightly trusted to command the Aegean Sea and prevent reinforcements or supplies from reaching Salonika.

The Montenegrins, always spoiling for a fight with the Turk, made the first hostile move, and crossed the frontier on October 8, intent on the capture of Scutari, a far bigger town than any in their own little kingdom and one which they had long coveted. The other three Balkan States were then still considering the note addressed to them by the Powers, in which they were informed that they could not possibly hope to gain such good terms for the Christians of Macedonia as the Powers undertook to obtain. The Powers, therefore, urged them not to make war, and warned

them that even if successful they would not be allowed to alter the map of the Balkans. The Balkan States eventually replied on October 13, that they were much obliged for the kind interest taken by the Powers in the Macedonian Christians, but thought that this time they would deal with the Sultan's government themselves. They accordingly sent an ultimatum to Constantinople demanding autonomy for Turkey's Christian subjects in Europe, together with a whole system of supervision by officials representing the Powers and the Balkan States. As they expected, Turkey could not stand this insolence from her former vassals and declared war on Serbia and Bulgaria on October 17. Greece was omitted from the declaration of war, for the Turks thought that she could be bought out; but she replied by declaring war herself on October 18. The unexpected had come to pass. The four Christian states stood shoulder to shoulder against their old enemy.

The attempt of the Powers to prevent the outbreak of hostilities is a little odd in view of the encouragement previously given to the Balkan League. It seems clear that Russia had not contemplated the Serbo-Bulgarian allies entering into a war with Turkey, who was generally considered strong enough to crush them. The Western Powers were anxious only to prevent hostilities which might have far-reaching effects and upset the general peace of Europe. Germany and Austria-Hungary gladly foresaw the defeat of the Balkan League, but joined in the warning that no territorial changes would be allowed, probably in order that the victorious Turks should not be able to regain any of their lost empire. Anyhow, the diplomats of Europe were accustomed to dealing very slowly, cautiously, and ineffectively with the Eastern Question, and were amazed at the audacity

of the Allies in taking the initiative out of the hands of the Powers. No one knew what complications might not follow if Balkan difficulties were tackled in this summary fashion. Issues would not be lacking over which a European war might break out. But the Balkan Leaguers were not going to be stopped. They had seen the results of thirty years of talk about Macedonia. They had now got the bit between their teeth and they bolted straight for the Turkish fence.

. . . . . .

Now what was the position of the Serbs when they entered the war on October 17? Against them they had a still redoubtable enemy. The Italian complication was at once removed, for the Turks made peace with Italy in order to devote their full attention to the war in Europe. The best troops which the Turks had been able to collect they had sent to Macedonia under the command of Zeki Pasha. The mobilization had worked with unexpected smoothness and accuracy under the direction of German officers. The Serbs' own army had been untried for nearly thirty years and did not enjoy a high reputation. Their allies of Greece and Bulgaria could hardly be counted as whole-hearted and devoted friends. On their flank were the hostile Albanians. And in their rear was the constant menace of Austria-Hungary ready to cross the Serbian frontier should the Serbs be defeated. To these, then, victory was essential, and all ranks knew it.

In Serbia military service is universal, and required from the age of twenty-one to that of forty-six: two years with the colours, nine in the reserve, eight in the second ban, and six in the third ban. Lads from seventeen to twenty and men from forty-six to fifty can be called out for home defence in time of war. There was a small core of permanent officers and N.C.O.s, and the first ban was admirably equipped, but the

general appearance of the army was not professional. The men of the second and third bans brought their own ponies, horses, carts, and equipment. The transport service consisted mainly of the peasants' ox-wagons. The country was poor and could not afford more elaborate arrangements. But out of a population of less than three millions she furnished an army of over 400,000 men—nearly 100,000 more than had been expected—an army soon to be recognized as the equal of any fighters in the world.

There were two deficiencies in the war material of the army which, while not affecting the issue of the military operations, caused the Serbs severe losses. Had they possessed aeroplanes they would have known the exact disposition of the Turkish troops in the battles at Kumanovo and Prilep; and their poverty in mountain artillery was responsible for the check they received before the strong positions at the Babuna Pass and at Oblakovo near Monastir. On the other hand, the Serbs alone of the Allies had foreseen the supreme value of heavy artillery in modern war. Their guns were French and excellent, and later on were borrowed by the Bulgars to batter down the defences of Adrianople, where the dominance of heavy pieces over permanent works was first demonstrated in European warfare.

The old days of courtier-generals were gone. The Serbs now had generals whom they trusted to lead them with vigour and scientific skill. General Putnik, an old hero of the wars of 1876–8, was placed in supreme command, and for him King Peter revived the ancient title of 'Voivoda', which corresponds literally to the mediaeval English title of 'duke' and to the modern military rank of 'Field-Marshal'. The Chief-of-Staff was Colonel Mishitch (now 'Voivoda' and commanding the First Serbian Army), the ablest living

master of the art of war in the difficult Balkan country. In charge of the Serbo-Bulgarian force advancing from Kustendil was General Stepan Stepanovitch (now also 'Voivoda', and commanding the Second Army), a retiring personality, hardly known except as a devotee of his profession.

But above all other advantages the Serbian army possessed the strength that comes from complete unity between all ranks and a common determination to conquer or die, but neither to return defeated nor to halt before they had driven the Turk from their own ancestral lands. The soldiers had, too, the moral force—peculiar to a mystical and traditionalist people—that comes from visions of past saints and heroes. They saw the victors of their faith and nation once more leading the way to victory.

A French journalist gives us an example of the spirit that animated them. The attack on the Babuna Pass was entrusted to the Morava division. The Turks held a string of positions admirably fortified on heights of more than 4,000 ft. When the Fifth regiment, after clambering up the precipitous slopes where no artillery support was possible, had established itself in the captured Turkish lines, all its officers and two-thirds of the men were dead. A wounded soldier recounted the attack to M. Barby, a war correspondent: 'We were advancing up a sort of funnel. The Turks overwhelmed us with a hail of bullets and shrapnel. We fell, but we still advanced. Suddenly . . . everything spun round me and I lost consciousness. Yet still I heard the voice of my lieutenant, "Forward, my brothers. See, the tower of Kralyevitch Marko!"'[1]

In a cavern in those hills, so says the Serbian legend, is Marko sleeping. His sword is driven into the rock. Beside

[1] Barby, p. 114.

him is his horse, Sharatz, nibbling the moss. Some day the sword will fall with a clatter on the stony floor of the cave; Marko will wake, and mounting Sharatz will call his countrymen to the last victorious onslaught against the Moslem. Many a Serb saw Marko in those days of November 1912 and charged under his leadership '*za krst chasni i slobodu zlatnu*' —'for the holy cross and golden liberty'.

Mr. Crawfurd Price recounts how he discussed the battle of Kumanovo with a schoolmaster who was serving as a private in the Serbian army. 'What gave you', he asked, 'such tremendous *élan* after the severe gruelling you received during the first day's fight?' 'Well,' the Serb replied quietly, 'during the combat we all saw St. Sava, robed in white, and seated in a white chariot drawn by white horses, leading us on to victory.'[1]

. . . . . .

Let us now follow the outlines of the campaign. The Turkish General Staff, who were confident of success against opponents whom they despised, had prepared a plan which, if successful, bid fair to end the war with great rapidity. While a small force held back the Greeks in the mountains to the south, the main Turkish army was to advance from Skoplye, defeat the Serbs in one crucial battle at Kumanovo, and then march straight on Sofia, annihilating General Stepanovitch's force on the way. The Bulgarian army in Thrace would then be between two fires and would offer but little resistance. Kumanovo, therefore, was the decisive point of the whole war, and Turkish staff officers referred to it as the 'great battle' that was to give them the victory.

With this object Zeki Pasha's troops attacked the Crown Prince Alexander's main Serbian army on October 23, before

[1] Crawfurd Price, *Balkan Cockpit*, p. 154.

the Serbian concentration was complete. All day they were held by the Serbian infantry, who, however, had to fall back inch by inch, till in the nick of time the guns and reinforcements reached them. As the day closed the Turks made a last supreme effort. The two races were locked in a desperate struggle. Bit by bit at the point of the bayonet the Serbs pressed their opponents back and drove them once more into their positions.

Next day it was the Serbs' turn to take the offensive. Supported by the fire of their gunners, they broke the Turkish line and hurled the enemy in headlong rout. As soon as the retreat sounded, Zeki Pasha's army became a flying rabble. Efforts were made to re-form them at Skoplye, but they fled on southwards, and the Serbs entered the ancient capital of their nation without a blow. Nor did the Turks halt at Veles, their next line of defence, but turning to the south-west took up the almost impregnable position on the Babuna mountains, of which we have already spoken. For three days desperate fighting ensued, until at last the Serbs won through on November 4 and descended into the Monastir plain to occupy Prilep. The Serbs say that the struggle for the Babuna Pass was the hardest of all the campaign, and it cost them dear, but they had driven the Turks to their last defences at Monastir. Old Serbia was theirs and they awaited the final act of the drama in supreme spiritual exaltation.

They paused at Prilep to recover from the slaughter at the pass, and this delay enabled their enemy to put the final touches to the trenches on the hills round Monastir. The Turks were still formidable. They have always been magnificent in defence. Their commander, Djavid Pasha, had just put heart into them by the one Turkish success recorded in the Macedonian campaign. The fifth division of the Greek army,

incautiously pushing northwards from Sorovitch, had come up into the Monastir plain and occupied Banitza on November 1. Djavid, who had been luring them on, fell upon the Greeks the next day and drove them back over the hills, attacked them again on the 5th and scattered them towards the south. Then he returned to face the Serbs.

We have discovered in the present war what a strong position Monastir is. For months now the allied armies, though possessed of the town, have been unable to move the Germano-Bulgarian forces from the hills that dominate it. To the north and west the mountains present every opportunity for defence. To the east and south stretches the bare plain, offering no cover for an attacking army. In addition to this the early winter of 1912 was unusually gloomy and wet, and when the Serbian troops moved forward on November 13 they found that the Tserna had overflowed its bank and converted itself into a vast lake.

With the mountains on one side and the wide marshes and floods on the other the Serbs had to contend with terrible obstacles. For five days the battle raged with varying fortunes. On the fifth (November 19) the Turks were finally dislodged from Oblakovo (to the north-west of Monastir) and their retreat to Albania thus threatened. Meanwhile the Danube division had crossed the mile-and-a-half of Tserna water that lay to the east. Holding hands to avoid being swept away in the rapid and ice-cold currents, those superb soldiers moved slowly onward under the hail of Turkish fire, gained the dry land, fixed their bayonets, and rushed upon the batteries that had been playing upon them. The attack was now closing in on all sides, and the Turkish commander decided to retire with the remains of his army while there was yet time. Leaving behind 10,000 prisoners and a vast

quantity of war material, Djavid Pasha and all that was left of the Turkish army of Macedonia moved off to Ohrida and thence to Albania, where his troops passed the winter, returning to Constantinople by sea on the conclusion of peace.

In less than a month the Serbs had cleared all northern and central Macedonia of the power which for more than five centuries had held the whole country in its grip. Nor had they employed all their forces. After Kumanovo two divisions had been detached and sent off to Thrace to support the Bulgars in front of Adrianople. As for a Bulgarian force which had been attached to the extreme left of the Serbian army, after three days' fighting its commanding officer informed his Serbian chief that he had news of a Turkish concentration at Radovishte and that he proposed to move south and engage the enemy. Though the information, whether actually received or not, was untrue, the Bulgars did not return, but pushed on towards Salonika in a desperate hurry to reach that coveted city before their Greek allies.

While Macedonia was thus summarily cleared of the Turkish armies, the other Serbian forces were hastening to occupy the territory which according to treaty was to be incontestably annexed to their country. General Yankovitch's troops came through the mountains on to the historic plain of Kossovo where their ancestors had fallen before the Turkish conqueror. Without an order the Serbian soldiers saluted the hallowed ground; and a curious legend had a quaint fulfilment. The plain is covered in parts with white pebbles said to have been the bread of the Christian host at the great battle. By a miracle these had been turned into stones, on which the hungry Turks only broke their teeth. For five centuries the Serbs awaited the day when they should return and eat the bread of Kossovo. Now, in October 1912,

MONASTIR FROM THE AIR

General Yankovitch's soldiers arrived at Mitrovitza weary and famished, and there in the station were eight abandoned wagons of ration biscuits. The bread of Kossovo! The old debt was paid.

During the nineteenth century the Serbian population of the plain had been diminishing before the influx of Albanians, and the land was being increasingly left untilled. To avoid persecution and massacre the Serbs had taken to the Albanian dress and language, at any rate in public. 'Brothers,' said one old Serb as he led a crowd of these unfortunate people to greet the invading army, 'Brothers, it was time you came; we have waited five hundred years for you; but in a few years you would have found no one left.'

The Albanians, who had assured the Turkish General Staff that they could deal with the Serbian army, showed themselves useless in modern warfare and put up but the feeblest resistance. The Serbs occupied the Sandjak and pressed on through the mountains to help their Montenegrin comrades to besiege Scutari. That march, through the inhospitable wilds of northern Albania, was in itself one of the great feats of the war. A difficult matter at any time, it was rendered a tremendous effort of endurance by the severity of the winter weather. At last they came to the ports of Medua and Durazzo. When from the last lines of hills the soldiers saw the sea, all recognized the solemnity of the moment in the history of their race. The door of national freedom lay open to them. There was the open sea across which Serbia could join without hindrance in the commerce and the civilization of the world. In perfect order they marched to the beach at Durazzo. The Serbian tricolour was planted in the water, and as the red, blue, and white fluttered out on the breeze a threefold shout was raised of '*Zhivelo Serbsko more*' ('Three

cheers for the Serbian sea'). That evening the doctors attended to a hundred and forty-seven men whose feet were frozen, but who had been determined with the help of their comrades to reach the shore and take their part in saluting the Serbian sea.

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From the south the Greek army had done its share. If it did not face a very serious enemy, at any rate it proceeded to crumple him up with the utmost dispatch. Passing through Verria the Crown Prince Constantine engaged the Turks at Yenidje-Vardar, and drove them like sheep back on to Salonika, which he entered as conqueror on November 9. The Greeks had at once set about the organization of government in the great prize that had fallen to them, when next day to their surprise and disgust a Bulgarian force arrived, claiming to have fought their way at great sacrifice to Salonika. As a matter of fact the Turks made no organized resistance in the country immediately north of the town, and the Bulgars appear to have described as a great battle their own very questionable act of firing on the Turkish rabble who had already surrendered to the Greeks. The Bulgars, deeply chagrined to find themselves a day too late, asked that at any rate two battalions should be allowed to occupy quarters in Salonika. On receiving permission for that number of troops, they promptly marched in ten battalions with cavalry and guns. And so began the curious dual occupation of Salonika and its environs which provoked many quarrels and outbreaks, and continued until the following July, when the second Balkan war ended an impossible situation.

So in December 1912 the Serbs were masters of more territory than they had ever expected to conquer. The Greeks

had far exceeded their own wildest expectations. The Montenegrins, though not in Scutari, were certain of expansion. All were ready for peace. But Bulgaria's success had not been equal to her ambitions. Until she was assured not only of Macedonia but also of Thrace, that is to say by far the greater part of the whole allied conquests, she had no intention of laying down her arms. I think it is easy to see the Bulgarian view of the situation and to sympathize with the Bulgars. Theirs was the largest and most powerful of the allied armies. Their first overwhelming successes had been trumpeted abroad as the really decisive victories of the war, till they themselves believed that they had borne the whole burden of the serious fighting. By mid-November they had driven back the Turks to the fortified line of Chataldja and settled down to the siege of Adrianople. Macedonia had been their real objective, though the plan of campaign demanded that they should fight in Thrace. But they had been carried forward by their own impetus, and Tsar Ferdinand was now determined to instal himself in Constantinople, the ancient capital of the Eastern Emperors. Kiamil Pasha offered to negotiate for peace, but Bulgaria was still on the flood-tide of success and the order was given for the attack on Chataldja. For three days (November 17–19) her troops hurled themselves against the fortifications. But the Turks had pulled themselves together and finally succeeded in repelling their enemy.

This check, which had all the appearance of being permanent, combined with the sickness and fatigue from which the Bulgars were suffering, caused Ferdinand to incline towards an armistice. The Greeks, seeing the opportunity the Turks would thus obtain for hurrying up fresh troops and transporting them to Thrace, objected to the suggestion, and offered to force the Dardanelles by a combined military and

naval offensive. Bulgaria, who evidently did not want her allies interfering in the Sea of Marmora, did not deign to reply to this proposal. On the contrary on December 3 Bulgaria, speaking in the name of Serbia and Montenegro, made an armistice with the Turks, in violation, it will be remembered, of clause 5 of the Bulgaro-Greek military convention. Greece, who held the sea, refused to abandon hostilities, and continued her blockade, thereby being of the utmost assistance to the Bulgars as she prevented Turkey from pouring troops into Dedeagatch and falling on the Bulgarian flank.

Despite this difference among the Allies, all five Balkan States agreed to send their delegates to London to discuss terms of peace under the chairmanship of Sir Edward Grey. While the conference continued the Greek fleet controlled the Aegean, and the three surviving Turkish fortresses of Scutari, Yannina, and Adrianople were not to be re-victualled or supplied in any way.

The Turks had received a terrible blow to their self-respect. If they had been nothing else, they had always been esteemed by friends and enemies to be mighty warriors. Yet in less than a month they had been driven from almost the whole of their European possessions. To many of the inhabitants of Macedonia the sudden collapse of the age-long Turkish domination seemed incredible. The Turks had often been defeated by Austria and Russia, but it had never seemed to make much difference. The Empire of the East had remained theirs.[1]

[1] In October 1916, one Company A.S.C. (M.T.) were billeted in the little mountain village of Batachin, near Ostrovo. The villagers were convinced that the Turks had come back. It was only when the Company paid for their billets that the people saw their mistake.

The Turks were certain now by diplomacy and delay to attempt the recovery of what had been lost on the field of battle. Still, Kiamil Pasha's government was moderate and had not to live up to the nationalist reputation of the Young Turks. It was therefore hoped that the end of the year would see peace restored.

6

The Bulgarian War

Neka dodje na nyega pogibao nenadna, i mrezha koyu ye namyestio neka ulovi nyega, neka on u nyu padne na pogibao. Psalm xxxv. 8.

In December 1912 the Allies had possessed themselves of all the territory for which they had entered the war. Serbia had overrun her portion—the Sandjak, Old Serbia, and northern Albania—and her troops were in occupation of all northern Macedonia. But now the sinister figure of Austria-Hungary began to appear upon the scene. It was immediately after M. Daneff, the Bulgarian minister, had paid a visit to Buda-Pesth that Austria-Hungary first indicated that the Serbs would not be left in possession of the strip of Adriatic coast to which they had penetrated. Ever since the first Serbian victories the cabinets of Vienna and Buda-Pesth had shown their irritation at the failure of Turkey to crush their southern neighbour. Assuming the championship of the Albanian 'nation', they adopted a threatening tone towards Serbia. 200,000 troops, the units being of German and Magyar race, were massed along the frontier. The Save and the Danube were carefully mined. Officers crossed the rivers to photograph the Serbian bank. Monitors flashed their searchlights on the royal palace and amused themselves by rushing past the wharves of Belgrade, upsetting the boats moored along the shore. A few kilometres from the city shells fell close to a number of customs officials. A monstrous agitation was raised against Serbia by the war-party at Vienna over

what was known as the Prochaska affair. It was roundly asserted that M. Prochaska, Austro-Hungarian consul at Prizren, had been brutally insulted and even mutilated by the Serbs in their advance southwards. For a month every means was used to persuade the old emperor and his government that the monarchy had been outraged and that war was an absolute necessity. At the end of that time the investigations of an Austrian consular official at Prizren proved that the whole story was an infamous fabrication of those who were determined to fix a quarrel upon Serbia.

But the Serbs were not to be provoked into any ill-timed act of resentment. Their main desire now was to conclude peace with the Turks as soon as possible, lest these Austro-Hungarian demonstrations should develop into something more serious. But the Bulgars would have no peace which did not give them Adrianople. While the discussions and disputes on that point were still proceeding, a *coup d'état* in Constantinople suddenly changed the Turkish government and restored the state of war in the Balkans.

If what one reads of that revolution at the time is true, it makes a rather curious tragi-comedy. In January 1913 Enver Bey (now Pasha) and a group of the Young Turk leaders decided to make another bid for power. They understood that the Cabinet had actually come to terms with the Allies and agreed to surrender Adrianople. Here was an admirable means of overthrowing Kiamil's government. They would appeal to Turkish opinion against the traitors who were handing over the fortress and holy city to the infidels. At the same time they would not be under the dire necessity of continuing the desperate struggle of war, for they would hold themselves obliged to stand by the plighted word of the late ministers, on whom the odium

of the loss of Adrianople would fall. So on January 23 Enver and his associates entered the building where the Cabinet was assembled. Nazim Pasha, the Commander-in-Chief, was in the corridor. Enver shot him, and then proceeded to arrest the other ministers. The Young Turks assumed the reins of power and formed a new government. But in the late ministry had been an astute Armenian, Nourreddungian Effendi, who had had his suspicions that some trouble was brewing and had consequently delayed a final decision on the question of Adrianople. Thus the Young Turks found the matter still unsettled and themselves in the same dilemma as their predecessors. They had to choose between surrendering the coveted city or continuing the apparently hopeless attempt to expel the Bulgars from Thrace. Urged thereto by their German counsellors, they decided to re-open hostilities.

On January 29, therefore, the conference at London dissolved, though not before the Bulgars had claimed the future possession of Dibra. Observe where Dibra lies. It is well to the north-western or Serbian side of the prearranged partition line, and the claim showed that the Bulgars had no intention of being bound by that division, which had assigned to them all the most valuable portion of Macedonia. They clearly wished to drive a thick wedge of Bulgarian territory—at its narrowest the whole distance from Dibra to Ohrida—between Serbia and Greece. Thus Serbia, now expelled from the Adriatic coast, would find herself hemmed in more completely than before her victorious campaign. Instead of easy-going Turkey to the south she would now have Bulgaria and the new Albania, both States in the Austrian service.

The war now resolved itself into a struggle for the

capture of the three Turkish fortresses. Yannina fell to the Greeks on March 4. But Adrianople continued to defy its besiegers. To reduce it the Bulgars were obliged to borrow the Serbian heavy artillery, which now joined the two divisions already sent to the Thracian front. I suppose we should be right in saying that the power of heavy guns to batter down any permanent fortifications was first demonstrated in European warfare, not at Liège and Namur, but at Adrianople. Anyhow the Serbian gunners caused the surrender of Ekmetchikei and the adjacent high ground on March 25. This sealed the fate of the city, which capitulated the next day. To prevent his Allies from receiving the credit of their success, General Savoff, the Bulgarian Commander-in-Chief, ordered General Ivanoff, commanding before Adrianople, on no account to allow Shukri Pasha to surrender to the Serbs. Unfortunately for that plan Shukri Pasha had already done so when the order arrived.

With the fall of Adrianople Bulgaria's war with Turkey practically ceased. The situation in Thrace was one of stale-mate. The Turks were beaten back to their last line of defence, but that last line could not be forced. Bulgaria began to turn her thoughts to the division of the conquered territories and to very probable trouble with her Allies. Troops began to move across towards the Serbian and Greek provisional frontiers. An attempt was made to retain the two divisions and the guns lent by the Serbian army, but, as these began to march away homewards, transport was at last placed at their disposal, though they were hurried through Sofia to avoid any demonstrations of enthusiasm by the people for the conquerors of Adrianople.

While they treated privately for an armistice with the Turks (contrary again to the treaties with Greece and

Serbia) the Bulgars were preparing to gather in for themselves the entire fruits of victory. The more moderate among them did not aim at anything less than the big Bulgaria of the treaty of San Stefano, reduced by the minimum of concessions to Serbia, and increased by the territory of Adrianople. M. Gueshoff, the Prime Minister and leader of this 'moderate' party, proposed to secure the frontiers laid down at San Stefano, with the cession, however, of Salonika to Greece. The more grasping policy, which ultimately prevailed, would have made Salonika a Bulgarian port and pushed the Greeks south of the Vistritza river. To support these aspirations the Bulgarian army began to take up its position along the provisional frontier in eastern and central Macedonia.

Whilst the Allies were thus moving slowly towards a second struggle, a far more overwhelming war-cloud was arising in Albania. The one remaining Turkish fortress of Scutari had long proved too strong for the Montenegrins and the Serbian force that had crossed the mountains to their assistance. Essad Pasha, one of the very few men who have in recent times exercised a widespread authority in Albania, had supplanted his chief in the command of the garrison and was conducting a spirited resistance. The Montenegrins, however, were determined to have Scutari, a far larger town than any in their own little kingdom, and one which they hoped to make their capital. At last on April 23 the place surrendered and King Nicholas entered it in triumph, after a costly siege of nearly seven months.

Then the blow fell. Austria-Hungary, intent on the erection of an Albanian State which should shut out the Serbs from the sea, very naturally pointed out that Scutari was an Albanian town and refused to tolerate the continued

presence there of the Montenegrin army. For a time King Nicholas refused to budge. As over the Serbian conquest of the coast, so now over the Montenegrin occupation of Scutari, it seemed more than likely that Europe would be unable to avoid a general conflagration. Every preparation was made along Austria's eastern frontier for war with Russia. But the situation was saved just in time. King Nicholas abandoned the coveted town and handed it over to an international force representing the Great Powers. He is said to have made a very good thing out of the international crisis by speculating on the Viennese Bourse, whose movements he was in a position to control.

There were a couple of excellent cartoons at this time in the ever-apposite pages of *Punch*. The first represented the six Powers driving in a motor-car along a narrow Albanian road and about to cross a small bridge, which was just broad enough to permit of their passage. Standing in the middle of the bridge was a cock, defying the oncoming car and refusing to make way. In the second the Montenegrin cock had leapt on to the parapet of the bridge and was calling after the car as it sailed safely past, 'Ha! Ha! Gave you a nasty scare that time. And your troubles aren't over yet. You'll find that old bird Essad farther down the road.' [1]

The spectre of European war had been exorcised, but the expulsion of the Serbs and Montenegrins from their conquests by no means meant the end of trouble in Albania. In the Conference of London, renewed after the fall of Adrianople, the Powers set themselves to elaborate a possible solution for that most thorny subject. Since the Balkan Allies had entered the war on behalf of the principle of nationality, it seemed only reasonable that the Albanians

[1] *Punch*, May 7 and May 14, 1913.

should be placed under a government of their own. The objection to that course, however, is that alone of European peoples the Albanians seem to dislike all idea of government. Of some peoples we say that they are corrupt, or uncivilized, or as yet incapable of managing their own affairs. But nowhere else in Europe do the inhabitants of a country object to orderly government as such. 'Albania for the Albanians' was a programme which was certain to sooth the Liberal democracies of Europe. Also there was the impossibility of placing the country under any other State. Serbia only wanted northern Albania because the Serbian coast of Dalmatia was closed to her. If she were expelled to make room for Austria-Hungary, Italy would have something to say at such a challenge to her Adriatic interests. Italy also would object to the north-westward expansion of Greece for the same reasons.

So when peace came on May 30 and Turkey surrendered all her European possessions west of the Enos-Midia line to the united Balkan League, an exception was made in favour of Albania, which was placed under the Powers pending its erection into an independent principality. This solution was virtually the triumph of Austria-Hungary, for an autonomous, and therefore anarchic, Albania would offer abundant opportunities for Austrian interference. A German prince ascended the throne of the new State, and, above all, Serbia was driven back from the sea and ringed round once more by her enemies. Serbia was, however, promised a railway through the gap in the hills from Liesh to Prizren, along the course of the old Roman road from the Adriatic to the Danube, a project which never materialized.

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Turkey being at last eliminated, it now remained for the Allies to divide the spoils of war. The only agreement between them was the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty partitioning Macedonia. But that treaty had been concluded on several assumptions. One of these was that only Macedonia, and fringes of country west and north and east of it, would be the objects of annexation. Another was that northern Albania would form part of the territorial dividend. But both these assumptions were now falsified. Bulgaria had effected conquests in Thrace, while Serbia had been ejected from Albania. After conquering Old Serbia, northern Albania, and the greater part of Macedonia, the Serbs found themselves expected to be content with Old Serbia only, and even there the Bulgars had pretensions to Skoplye. The Serbian government, therefore, began to demand a revision of the partition treaty. They asked for that portion of Macedonia of which their armies were actually in occupation. This meant that Monastir, Ohrida, Prilep, and Veles would become Serbian, while the Bulgarian frontier would follow the River Zletovska and a line from Shtip to Doiran. Should this arrangement not meet with Bulgarian approval—as it was certain not to do—the Serbs pointed out that the original treaty provided for Russian arbitration in all cases of dispute, and professed their willingness to refer the issue to the Tsar. M. Gueshoff was in favour of such a pacific solution, being confident doubtless that the Russian emperor would grant his country more than the Serbian proposal had allowed her. His desire for peace was, however, rendered futile by the rising determination of the real directors of policy at Sofia to crush any Allied State that opposed Bulgarian hegemony in the Balkans; so that, while the Bulgarian government was preparing for arbitra-

tion, the Bulgarian army was being secretly massed for an attack on the Greeks and Serbs.

Neither the Bulgarian nor the Serbian people had any enthusiasm for war against the other. The Bulgars, satisfied with their defeat of Turkey, were anxious to go home and had begun to desert. General Savoff, in a dispatch of June 18 which he wrote to M. Daneff, admitted the difficulty he found in keeping his army together: 'It is my duty to inform you that I am not in a position to guarantee that in ten days' time I shall be able to keep our men with the colours.'[1] He further thought it necessary the next day to circularize his army commanders on the subject of discontent in the army and to urge them to combat it with energy. On the other hand the Serbs also were anxious to avoid fighting their Allies, with whom they were on excellent terms. They knew that their most dangerous enemy was not before them but behind, across the Save and the Danube. They had no wish further to deplete their supplies of men and munitions in view of the ever-threatening Austro-Hungarian menace. How abundantly right they were in their fears at this time was revealed by M. Giolitti, the Italian statesman, in the Chamber of Deputies at Rome on December 5, 1914. He stated that on August 9, 1913, he heard from the Italian Foreign Minister that 'Austria has communicated to us and to Germany her intention of taking action against Servia, and defines such action as defensive, hoping to bring into operation the *casus foederis* of the Triple Alliance . . .'[2] Italy refused to allow that any such action against Serbia could be described as defensive, since no one thought of attacking Austria-Hungary, and

[1] Balcanicus, p. 70.

[2] *Diplomatic Documents*, p. 401. Appendix to *Serbian Blue Book*.

Italy's argument was evidently accepted, for her alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary was in no way disturbed. M. Take Jonescu, the Roumanian leader, has also declared that in May 1913, before Serbia and Bulgaria had come to blows, Austria-Hungary approached his government with a view to united action against Serbia.[1] The Austro-Hungarian government has denied this revelation so categorically that we are obliged to suspend judgement on the point. But M. Giolitti's statement is sufficient indication of the danger with which Serbia was threatened in the summer of 1913.

Despite Bulgaria's pretence of adhering to Russian arbitration, she was rapidly drifting towards war with Serbia. The argument as to which of the two countries is to blame for the outbreak of hostilities is endless. The Bulgarian case seems to me simple and intelligible. They had their treaty with Serbia and they insisted on its being put into force. If the Serbs had occupied Monastir and the Vardar valley, that was merely because the common Allied strategy had placed the Bulgarian army in Thrace (which the Bulgars now represented as the all-important theatre of operations). Moreover, the Serbs had already broken the treaty by a secret agreement with Greece, and as early as September 1912, before the war began, had been claiming and intriguing to obtain some districts south-east of the line of partition.[2]

As far back as December 1912 the Greeks, fearing with good reason a Bulgarian attempt on Salonika, had approached the Serbs with a view to mutual guarantees against their ally and possible foe. The negotiations were unofficial, for M. Venizelos placed his hopes in a continued Balkan Alliance, while M. Pashitch strongly supported a close understanding

[1] *Le Livre bleu serbe*, p. 77. [2] Gueshoff, p. 62.

with Bulgaria. But as the probability of war increased the proposals took a more definite form, and the two States entered into a treaty, preceded on June 1 by a military convention, by which they agreed to support each other in possession of Monastir and Salonika respectively. Serbia offered Bulgaria the districts of the Bregalnitza and Strumitza, but claimed the Vardar down to Gyevgyei, after which point that river was to become Greek. The Greeks left Doiran and Kilkitch to the Bulgars, but insisted on their right to the coastland. Thus the Bulgars were left a considerable stretch of Macedonia to the east of the Vardar. Should they attempt to invade the territory claimed by either Serbia or Greece the two States agreed to act together against the aggressors. This is the famous Serbo-Greek agreement of which we have heard so much in the present war and which we shall have to consider again later.

Against this Bulgarian accusation of bad faith and a broken word the Serbs had an excellent case; they put forward many reasons for demanding a revision of the partition treaty. First, then, the original military convention had provided for an army of 100,000 Bulgars to support the Serbs in Macedonia. It is true that the later convention of September 28 reduced that force to a division. But that division had been transferred to the Thracian front almost immediately. As for a small Bulgarian force on the extreme left of the Serbs, after some three days' fighting, as we have seen, the Bulgarian commander informed his Serbian chief that he had news of a strong Turkish concentration at Radovishte and that he proposed to attack the enemy at that point, asking the Serbs to remain at Kotchana pending the result of the battle. Yet on discovering the falsity of the information the Bulgarian column did not return to their Allies as

was their plain duty, but hurried on to share in the disputed occupation of Salonika. So far from Bulgaria assisting Serbia, the reverse had been the truth. Serbia had sent 50,000 troops and her heavy artillery to Adrianople. After she had made good her conquests she had remained at war and kept her army with the colours for six months, while Bulgaria alone was profiting by the prolongation of hostilities.

Secondly, Bulgaria had come out of the war possessed of Thracian territory of which the Allies had not originally meditated the conquest. The Serbian contention, in fact, is that Bulgaria used her allies to secure Macedonia, which all wished to liberate, while she herself annexed another province, with the full intention of subsequently ejecting those allies from the country for which primarily all were fighting.

Thirdly, and most important of all, Serbia was not in the same position in 1913 as she had been before the war in respect of Albania. Having been summarily turned out of Albania by Austria-Hungary she saw all her efforts thrown away. If she were to have Albania on her western, and Bulgaria on her southern, frontier she would be completely hemmed in by Austria-Hungary and her vassals. If Serbia was not to have an outlook on the Adriatic, then she must make sure of a common frontier with her friend Greece and arrange for commercial rights at Salonika. The fact that Bulgaria had not been willing to support Serbia against Austria-Hungary in the Albanian affair was contrary to the very treaty on whose enforcement Bulgaria was now insisting.

Fourthly, the treaty had carefully made provision for the reconciliation of differences over the exact partition of Macedonia. The Serbs were following the letter of the treaty in demanding Russian arbitration to settle the point of dispute.

Further, the Serbo-Greek alliance, which was purely defen-

sive, was not even mooted, much less concluded, till after Bulgaria had privately offered Greece the possession of Salonika if she would join in a combined attack on Serbia.

For these reasons Serbia had abundant justification for demanding some extension in Macedonia. Yet had she attacked Bulgaria, or had she merely taken up a posture of defence and refused to listen to any proposal of concessions to Bulgaria, it would be impossible to acquit her of responsibility for the second Balkan war. The great fact which exonerates her from blame is that, unlike her opponent, she never refused to submit her case to judgement. As in July 1914, so in June 1913 she appealed to her adversary to reject the temptation of war and to abide by the decision of an impartial tribunal. That many Serbs suspected the impartiality of the Russian government, and doubted to the last the wisdom of submitting to it, makes their adherence to the proposal for arbitration all the more admirable. A considerable body of opinion in Serbia was inclined not to submit to the Russian award. The Serbs knew Russia's traditional weakness for Bulgaria and how her officers had encouraged the Bulgarian propaganda in Macedonia before the war. Russia had not supported them over Durazzo. She might now fail to support them over Monastir. An army so completely successful as the Serbian then was is apt to suffer from swelled head and pugnacity, especially when it sees some of the fruits of its victory in danger of being given away by diplomats across a table. Fortunately M. Pashitch was firm in his pacificism and able to carry the army and the country with him. Serbia was still waiting, though with misgivings, for the conference and decision at Petrograd, when she was suddenly attacked by her ally.[1]

[1] M. Gueshoff's contention is that Serbia would not agree to arbitration on the basis of the treaty of March 13, 1912, while Bulgaria at the last

But before entering on the description of the war which followed, let us consider the state of Bulgaria in the two months before the alliance was broken. During May M. Gueshoff was nominally directing the country's policy. It is probable that he was sincerely desirous of peace. But decisive power was really in the hands of King Ferdinand, the German-trained officers of the general staff, and the revolutionary committees whose business it had long been to claim Macedonia for the Bulgarian nation. The officers of the army were intoxicated with success and had a profound contempt for both Serbs and Greeks. On the eve of his meeting with M. Pashitch at Tzaribrod to discuss the situation M. Gueshoff, knowing that he had not his sovereign's confidence, offered his resignation. On June 1 he interviewed the Serbian Prime Minister and, despite the knowledge that in a few days he would resign the direction of Bulgarian policy to some less tractable successor, he agreed to a conference of the four allied states at Salonika. On June 6 his resignation was accepted and M. Daneff, the representative of more extended Bulgarian claims, became Premier.

Seeing the imminent danger of the dissolution of the Balkan League in a bitter internal conflict, the Russian government did everything in its power to keep the Slav States to the arbitration which they had promised to respect. On June 8 the Tsar addressed a dispatch to the Kings of Serbia and Bulgaria which closed with the words: 'I declare that the state which first engages in hostilities will have to

moment submitted to the Russian tribunal unconditionally. (Gueshoff, p. 81.) The answer is that, at the moment when the Balkan States were preparing for a conference on the subject, Bulgaria sprang her surprise attack. Also M. Daneff subsequently declared that M. Pashitch had just accepted arbitration. See *Nationalism and War in the Near East*, p. 269.

answer for it before the Slav world.' Up to the very day on which the fighting began M. Hartwig, the Russian minister at Belgrade, was convinced that war would be avoided. He had succeeded in pursuading the Serbs to submit to Russia's decision and did not know the contrary determination which prevailed in high quarters at Sofia.

Those who effectively controlled the destinies of Bulgaria received encouragement from Austria-Hungary in their preparation for war. A second Balkan war would weaken all the participants. As an official of the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office said at the time, 'We will allow these dogs to devour each other. Afterwards we shall dominate the Balkans.'[1] If, however, as seemed more likely, the war were short and sweet in Bulgaria's favour, a big Bulgaria suited the policy of Vienna very well. Failing her own possession of Salonika, Austria-Hungary saw the best means of securing herself against Serbia in the detachment of Bulgaria from Russia. She was therefore willing to support the most extreme Bulgarian pretensions, to Salonika, to the whole of Macedonia, even to southern Albania. Although the Turks, with their lack of organization and corrupt supply services, had been unable to defeat the Serbs, the admirable army of Bulgaria would surely make short work of the hated kingdom. So opinion in Sofia was carefully and systematically roused against Russian arbitration, which was represented as already committed to the Serbian view.

On June 19 Count Tisza, the Hungarian Prime Minister, made a speech in the Parliament of Buda-Pesth, which seems to me a model of provocative utterance masquerading as perfect innocence. 'Our interests', he said, 'demand the completest independence of the Balkan States. That is the

[1] Pélissier, p. 321.

Alpha and Omega of the policy we shall pursue in regard to the solution of Balkan problems. . . . Into this situation (Serbo-Bulgarian disagreement) has come the separate action of Russia towards Serbia and Bulgaria. Our starting-point is naturally that here also the Balkan States are independent and that they are consequently free to choose their own method of settling their differences. They may choose war or they may choose mediation or a tribunal of arbitration. . . . Nor can we allow any other state to acquire prerogatives detrimental to our fundamental principle of Balkan independence.'[1] The profession of solicitude for Balkan independence looked well and was calculated to touch the hearts of all who were not familiar with Hungarian policy. But the mention of war, not as a horrible danger to be avoided, but as a right of which the Balkan States could avail themselves, was a most admirably subtle provocation. Also reading Count Tisza's words one would suppose that Russia had aggressively thrust herself upon the Balkan kingdoms and arrogated to herself the disposal of their affairs. One would never guess that these States had agreed a year before to submit possible differences to Russia and that only moral force bound them to fulfil their word in this respect. The result of such language on the part of so eminent a man as the virtual dictator of Hungary could be nothing else but to inflame Bulgarian opinion against Russia and in favour of war.

'Pride goes before a fall' seems to be a formula almost invariably applicable to Balkan campaigns. The Turks had been so certain of victory in October 1912 that Fethi Pasha had remarked how delicate would be his position on entering victoriously into Belgrade, where for six years he had been

[1] Quoted in Savić, p. 186. The quotation has been curtailed, but nothing affecting the sense of the passage has been omitted.

Ottoman minister and had made many friends. In the present war there have been striking instances in which the favourite, certain of success, has gone down before a despised outsider. One or two quotations will illustrate the frame of mind in which Bulgaria's rulers broke the peace and attacked their allies.

The first is General Savoff's dispatch to M. Gueshoff of May 19, urging on the reluctant statesman the necessity of war. 'Any concession made to our enfeebled allies would provoke lively discontent in the ranks of the army. . . . The question is who is to have the hegemony of the Balkan peninsula. . . . A victorious war will decisively settle that question of hegemony in our favour. In one or two years from now it will be too late ; Europe will oppose it. That is why I think we ought to use every trick and means in our power, whilst declining responsibility for the war, to provoke an armed conflict with our allies. When we have inflicted on them a decisive defeat, we shall remove from our enemies all possibilities of creating obstacles to the realization of our national ideal. . . . According to the information which I possess about our future operations the Greeks after four days at the most will be under the necessity of breaking with the Serbs and will ask us for a separate peace to avoid disaster. Then our whole effort can be directed against Serbia. The Serbian army will at no point be able to resist the impetuous attack of our mighty columns.' [1]

Consider the characteristic notes of this pronouncement. War for hegemony, the solution of possible future difficulties by immediate armed conflict, deliberate provocation of allies in order to make them appear the aggressors, complete con-

[1] Balcanicus, p. 37. Quoted from the *Dnevnik* (General Savoff's organ) of June 15, 1914.

tempt for opponents. It is surely clear in what school these methods and ideals of conduct were learned. From the time that Bismarck tricked his Austrian allies into the war of 1866 up to the present day they have been the marks of the Prussian beast. From Prussia the poison has spread and been absorbed by those States whom she has drawn into her system.

The next quotation is from General Kovatcheff's 'order of the day', addressed to the Fourth Bulgarian Army on June 17. His army had moved through Macedonia to take up a position round Shtip in front of the Serbs who held a line of heights immediately to the west. The concentration of the Bulgarian forces was so obviously threatening that the Serbs might well have fallen upon them as they passed across their front. The Serbs made no movement, because they hoped still to avoid a rupture. General Kovatcheff either could not or would not understand such self-restraint. 'At the approach of our first detachments the *moral* of the Serbian army began to give way. To-day it is reduced to nothing. The fact that the concentration of our army has been accomplished before the Serbian front without the slightest hindrance shows clearly the moral condition of the Serbian army. It is unable to master its alarm, and its attitude has confirmed the rumours that the Serbian army had not the courage to enter into a struggle with us. Were it otherwise, would the Serbs have allowed us quietly to complete our concentration? That would be an example without precedent in history.'[1] Because the Serbs wished to avoid a fight, the general represented them as afraid to fight.

My third quotation consists of M. Daneff's remarks to the Roumanian minister at Sofia on July 1, after the outbreak of war, when Roumania was threatening intervention. 'You

[1] Balcanicus, p. 69.

want to frighten me, M. Ghika, by saying that you will enter Bulgarian territory. Very well, come, and what will you do there? You will take the Tutrakan–Baltchik line. That is what you want. You will enter the Dobrudja. That will be yours too. But you will not be able to go further, for you cannot mobilize your army in so short a time, and in ten days I will have finished with the Serbs.'[1]

There was the pride. Now let us record the fall.

The Bulgarian strategy was dictated not so much by the desire to inflict a complete defeat on the Serbs and Greeks, which would have taken time, as by the intention of rapidly driving the allies out of Macedonia and so relieving the Russian Emperor of his invidious task of arbitration. Consequently, instead of a vigorous attack at the heart of Serbia by Tzaribrod and Pirot, only a small force was placed on that section of the frontier to protect Sofia. The main concentration took the form of an angle with its apex at Shtip and its sides running back to Radovishte and along the Zletovska river, while the Bulgarian Second Army took up its position in eastern Macedonia with orders to capture Salonika as soon as the moment for hostilities came.

By July 22, when Tsar Ferdinand called a special council of state at his *château* at Vrana, the preparations were made. A delay of seven days, however, was agreed upon to allow Russia to declare her willingness to arbitrate on the basis of the partition in the treaty of March 13, 1912. If she failed to do so within the week, a surprise attack without declaration of war was to be made all along the line. So we come to the night of June 29. The Serbian and Bulgarian armies were fraternizing round Shtip. The outposts passed the monotonous hours of waiting in mutual visits and games of

[1] Balcanicus, p. 94.

cards. That evening some Serbian officers were asked to dine in the Bulgarian lines. Hosts and guests made merry and were photographed together. At about ten o'clock the Bulgars intimated that it was time for bed and saw the Serbs back to their camp. At three o'clock in the morning the Bulgars advanced, overpowered the Serbian guards, and murdered their guests of the previous evening in their sleep. In this manner, which seems more in keeping with a tale of adventure among Red Indians or African cannibals than with European warfare, began the Serbo-Bulgarian war. The Bulgars added a final touch by denouncing in the European press of July 1 the treachery of the Serbs in attacking *them*.

The first shock of the attack fell on the Drina Division of General Yankovitch's army. The first lines were rushed before the Serbs could recover from their surprise and organize their resistance. Farther south the enemy crossed the Vardar and occupied Gyevgyei. At Gradsko the Serbs were also driven across to the right bank. But by the end of the day Voivoda Putnik had a thorough grasp of the situation and issued orders to his army commanders to assume the offensive on July 1.

Then followed a short but desperate struggle. Serbian officers tell me that the Turkish war was nothing to it. Day and night for slightly over a week the two armies fought, mostly hand-to-hand with the bayonet. They were roughly equal in numbers. The Bulgars had the initial advantage of surprise and, had they not been stolidly resisted on June 30, they might then have dealt the decisive blow. But they were exhausted with their march across Bulgaria in the height of the Balkan summer. They had not the same enthusiasm for this war as for fighting the Turks. The shock-tactics and mass-formations in which they had assaulted the Turkish lines

had caused heavy losses. On the other hand, the Serbs had been resting since the previous autumn and were in fine condition. Gradually they pressed the Bulgars back. On July 5 Kotchana was taken. By the 9th the Serbs were in Radovishte. With the Bulgars driven out of the Vardar valley the Serbian army stopped and made no attempt to pursue their advantage, partly perhaps in the hopes of renewing the Bulgarian alliance, partly to preserve their forces to fight again another day against the enemy across the Danube.

Meanwhile with dramatic rapidity Bulgaria was attacked from all sides, and her plans of hegemony vanished in the complete collapse of her armed forces. The eastern frontier had been denuded of troops, with the result that the Turks could not resist the temptation of quickly re-occupying Adrianople. The city and fortress, which it had taken five months and a train of siege artillery to reduce, was retaken by a patrol of cavalry. Roumania, thinking it a pity not to be in any general division of territory, sent her army into Bulgaria, where it advanced unopposed to within a day's march of Sofia. But the Bulgars' great surprise came from the Greeks, whom they had been certain of defeating with ease. Just before the sudden attack on the Allies, General Hassapdjieff is said to have interviewed the officers of the Bulgarian force at Salonika and offered them permission to leave the town. At the same time he promised them that the Bulgarian army would be in Salonika on July 2. The officers accordingly decided to stay where they were and await the triumphal entry of their fellow countrymen. The general left Salonika on June 30, and the same day, hostilities having already begun, the Greek commandant, resisting the temptation to demand the surrender of the Bulgarian troops, ordered them to quit Greek territory. The Bulgars showed

that they had no intention of moving, and street-fighting began, the traces of which may still be seen in the many bullet-spattered houses of the Boulevard Hamidie (the broad street running inland from the White Tower). The Bulgars stood to their posts very gallantly. In the church of St. Sophia, amongst other places, they put up a desperate resistance. But machine guns played on them from above and the Cretan gendarmerie attacked them from below till they were overpowered, and Salonika passed into the undisputed possession of the Greeks.

Meanwhile, far from marching gaily to the sea, General Ivanoff's army was soundly defeated by the despised Greek forces, who secured their position along the coast and then pushing northwards joined hands with the Serbs and flung back the Bulgarian invasion.

Exactly a month from the beginning of the war Bulgaria gave in and an armistice was signed at Bucharest. In the discussions that followed Russia attempted to secure Adrianople and Kavalla for Bulgaria. But the Turks were not going to relinquish the city which by a godsend they had recovered. And the Greeks were in no humour to conciliate the Bulgars any more. By the Treaty of Bucharest (August 10) Bulgaria accordingly lost territory in every direction. The Turks kept Adrianople and so controlled the railway leading southwards to Dedeagatch down the Maritza valley. The Roumanians received their slice of the Dobrudja. The Bulgarian claims to Macedonia were set aside and that country divided between the Serbs and Greeks.

We may admit that this was severe treatment for the Bulgars. Their share of the conquered Turkish territory was thus reduced to the comparatively valueless coast-district between Kavalla and Dedeagatch, and the valley of

the upper Struma. Only two natural passages lead down from Central Bulgaria to the Aegean Sea, the Struma and the Maritza valleys. The former now passed into Greek possession ; the latter was cut by the Turks at Adrianople. But severe treatment is not always wrong. Nations, like individuals, cannot expect to have all their claims considered, when by their behaviour they have put themselves beyond the pale of civilized intercourse. There is such a thing as moral responsibility in national politics. The Bulgars at Bucharest paid a fitting penalty for their cynical display of treachery and greed. In a recent newspaper controversy a writer made this assertion : ' In what respect he [Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria] has played the traitor, or to whom, those who persistently miscall him would be hard put to it to prove.'[1] The proof does not seem to me to be very difficult. It was on July 30, 1913, when the Bulgarian army, by order of their king, suddenly fell upon their allies, that Ferdinand won his undying title of traitor.

We may ask how it was that Austria-Hungary and Germany, who had encouraged Bulgaria to enter on this second war, stood by and let their catspaw be crushed. We have already seen that Austria-Hungary had thoughts of striking at Serbia from behind. She did not interfere, perhaps because of Italy's firm refusal to countenance such a policy, perhaps because her own military arrangements were not completed, but probably most of all because Germany was not yet quite ready for the general European war which would doubtless have followed. There was the further consideration that if the Bulgars were forced to disgorge territory on every side they would feel a lasting resentment and hatred for the other Balkan States and be prepared, when the time came, to strike

[1] *The Near East*, May 4, 1917.

on the side of the Central Empires for the recovery of all and more than all that they had lost at Bucharest. The Central Empires began their work of indemnifying Bulgaria when they persuaded the Turks to hand over the Adrianople–Dedeagatch railway to her. They completed it when they gave her the opportunity of seizing half Serbia in 1915 and Kavalla and the Dobrudja last year.

. . . . . .

What then were the results for Serbia of the Balkan wars? Consider the cost of her effort first. Besides the loss of men, the expenses of the wars amounted to 530,600,000 francs. An immediate capital sum of 70,000,000 francs would be needed for the newly-acquired territories. Serbia's share, 17 per cent., of the Ottoman debt represented a capital of 40 more millions. All this meant that the national debt would be doubled. And against this accumulation could be set no sum received from their vanquished enemy, for it had been German policy at the conference in London to prevent the payment of any indemnity by Turkey.

On the other hand, Serbia was nearly twice as large as before. Her population was increased by 1,500,000, which placed her on a rough equality with Bulgaria and Greece. All the historic shrines of the race in Old Serbia had been recovered. No Austrian arm was now thrust out between Serbia and Montenegro, the two Serbian States having at last joined hands across the former Sandjak. The whole basin of the middle Vardar was Serbian, as well as the rich plains of Kossovo and Monastir. The new territory contained many flourishing towns considerably larger than any in Serbia except Belgrade: Monastir, Skoplye, Ohrida, Prishtina, Veles, Prilep. There were also large forests unexploited. The new territories also provided just those

products that were needed to complement the output of the northern districts. The *vilayet* of Kossovo, almost the whole of which went to Serbia, had produced in 1911 5,000,000 kilos of tobacco. In addition grapes, rice, pepper, hides, which the Serbs had had to import, were now procurable in the kingdom, while the Vardar railway now freely carried many articles which before the wars had paid duty at the Turkish frontier. Then there were the riches of the subsoil. The silver mines of Kopaonik and Kratovo had been worked in the Middle Ages and only awaited capital and enterprise. There was gold and copper and manganese, and it has been said that there is enough iron in Serbia to suffice for the needs of the whole of Europe. Above all, Serbia had definitely broken out of Austria-Hungary's economic web. An agreement with their Greek ally gave the Serbs free access to the sea at Salonika.

It is true that the presence in the new territories of a considerable number of Albanians and of Macedonian Slavs, who had been for thirty years taught to look to Bulgaria as their spiritual home, constituted a difficulty for Serbian administration. The Serbs, however, felt equal to the task of conciliating and assimilating the bulk of the heterogeneous population. What they now needed was twenty years of peace, in which industry and frugality would enable them to make use of the opportunities with which they were presented. But peace was precisely what Austria-Hungary, who had instigated two wars against them without success, had no intention of permitting.

7

The Murder at Sarajevo

For the Serbs the Balkan wars had been a period of mixed triumph and anxiety. By August 1913 they had achieved complete success. The statesmen, Serbian, Greek, and Montenegrin, who had concluded the treaty of Bucharest were greeted with enthusiasm as they arrived by water and stepped ashore at Belgrade. But the entry of the troops roused the capital to yet wilder expressions of delirious joy. Arches bearing the inscription 'Za Kossovo—Kumanovo. Za Slivnitzu, Bregalnitzu' (For Kossovo, Kumanovo. For Slivnitza, Bregalnitza) spanned the road. Amidst the shouts of the crowd and a rain of flowers the Danube division marched into the city. Foot, horse, and then the all-conquering guns, all decorated with bouquets. In front came a cavalcade, the General Staff of the Serbian army, and ahead rode a single officer in plain service uniform, the Crown Prince Alexander. Slowly the great procession made its way to the palace and defiled before the windows where stood the three veterans who had guided Serbia to this hour of triumph—King Peter, M. Pashitch, and Voivoda Putnik. As a monument to Kara-George was inaugurated the guns boomed out announcing their message of victory and peace. It was the greatest moment of Serbia's history.

But such moments pass; and the Serbs settled down to the task of putting their house in order. Many problems awaited solution. An Albanian insurrection kept a large part of the army still in action. Many of our Serbian friends have been continuously mobilized since September 1912.

Lieut. Krstitch tells me that he has never been home for more than twenty days on end since the Turkish war began. Then there was the religious problem. The adherents of the Greek Patriarchate and the Bulgarian Exarchate were transferred to the obedience of the Archbishop of Belgrade, the Greeks being allowed to keep their schools. The Mohammedans were less tractable and regretted the passing of the temporal power of their faith. The free exercise of their religion was, however, secured to them, and the Turks, at any rate, have accommodated themselves to the new situation. The Roman Catholic Albanians, who had long been used as pawns in the political game by Austria-Hungary, were removed from her influence by a *Concordat* with the Pope which placed them directly under the Roman Catholic bishop of Belgrade.

For some time after the proclamation of peace the new territories were under strict military government. The administration had to deal with hostile elements which had long been accustomed to the practice of pillage and murder, and with the agents of the Bulgarian propaganda. It cannot be pretended that the work of introducing order amongst the population of Old Serbia and Macedonia was unaccompanied by acts of violence, mistakes, excesses. It would have been remarkable had it not been so. Time was needed to soften the harshness of excessive nationalism and to reconcile the population, accustomed to the easy-going laxity of the Turks, to the more vigorous methods of the Serbs. Remember Serbia had only had her new territories for less than a year when the present war broke out. Yet in that time the government, urged on by the parliamentary opposition, had organized a civil police, set up ordinary tribunals of justice, and disarmed most of the population.

SARAJEVO

For general security and prosperity it was necessary to settle the question of the land. Under the Turks the peasants had been tenants paying a large portion of the fruits of their labour to Turkish or Albanian landlords. The government determined to introduce the Serbian system of peasant proprietorship and to facilitate the division of the large estates into small farms. As Macedonia was very thinly populated there was much available land which was not under cultivation. In Turkish times it had not been worth while to plough it. By opening a prospect of agricultural property in the new territories the government attracted immigrants who would otherwise have flocked to America. But the rights of the original inhabitants were carefully guarded. To them in the first instance was accorded the right to take up land; after them to Serbs of Serbia, and thirdly to Serbs or Slavs from other countries. No estate of less than five hectares was granted, and two further hectares were added for every male member of the family over sixteen years of age. Immigrants could have themselves, their animals and their implements, transported free of charge. For the first three years they were also to be free of all taxes, except an education rate. They could not alienate their property for the first fifteen years; after which period they were to enter into full ownership. By these means Serbia offered a home to many of her children who would otherwise have been absorbed in foreign lands, and set herself towards the reconciliation of her pro-Bulgarian subjects.

Lastly, there was the question of communication. Serbia had had the beginnings of an adequate railway system before 1912, but the new territories were very poorly provided. Besides the central Vardar railway from Skoplye to Salonika,

there were only the branch line to Mitrovitza and the Monastir line which leaves Serbian soil after a distance of twelve miles. A whole network of new railways was now planned, radiating in every direction, to assist the development of every corner whose fertility promised adequate results. The cost was estimated at 300,000,000 francs, while five more millions were devoted to an object with which any traveller in the Balkans will sympathize ; I mean the construction of roads in Serbian Macedonia.

Despite the heavy financial burdens with which Serbia was loading herself, we can readily understand the general feeling of well-being, made up of martial triumph and economic enterprise, with which the Serbs now set themselves to the various tasks that were to make their country prosperous and strong. But over their heads hung the menace of new troubles. All who knew South-Eastern Europe were very dubious about the stability of the Treaty of Bucharest. Austria-Hungary had twice seen her Balkan plans upset by the unexpected chance of war. She was determined that Serbia should not for ever stand between her and the Aegean Sea. And behind her was the far more sinister and powerful figure of the German Empire.

To understand the relation of Serbia to German policy we must stop a moment and consider the map of the world. Germany, disunited till 1871 and absorbed in European affairs till 1882, had entered very late into the competition of the Powers for colonies. But for the last thirty years she had grown continuously more eager for the addition to her Empire of new countries. She was determined to be a world-power, with a decisive voice in international questions and the control of remote continents. Her writers made no secret of the national ambition. An admirable and ever-

increasing fleet proclaimed her intention of ultimately challenging the British navy.

Foiled in the hope of using the Boers to establish German power in South Africa, German statesmen turned their attention to the Far East. Unable, owing to the common action of the Powers and the rise of Japan, to convert their territory of Kiao-Chau into an eastern empire, they then entered on their struggle with France for Morocco and the north-west coast of Africa. The solid resistance of France and Great Britain to German expansion in that quarter caused the Pan-Germans to put their faith in another plan to which no one was prepared to take exception. This great plan is best known under the short title of 'Berlin–Baghdad'. The main idea was the erection of a system or chain of allied States under the hegemony of Germany, and stretching from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf. Berlin had long been joined to Constantinople by excellent railways, and German engineers were busy with the completion of a further line which should stretch across the 900 miles of Turkey in Asia to Baghdad and Basra and link itself up with the railway running south from Damascus to Mecca. This railway was to develop and complete Germany's economic and military control of the Ottoman Empire. The great untapped riches of Asia Minor should flow westwards to Germany, and German officers would be found in control of everything as far as the Persian mountains and the deserts of Arabia.

The plan was admirably feasible, and has been put in force almost completely in the course of this war (not quite, for our troops are solidly established on the Persian Gulf and hold Baghdad, while the Russians have penetrated far into Armenia). If 'Berlin–Baghdad' were achieved, a huge

block of territory producing every kind of economic wealth and unassailable by sea-power would be united under German authority. Russia would be cut off by this barrier from her western friends, Great Britain and France. German and Turkish armies would be within easy striking distance of our Egyptian interests, and from the Persian Gulf our Indian Empire would be threatened. The port of Alexandretta and the control of the Dardanelles would soon give Germany enormous naval power in the Mediterranean.

A glance at the map of the world will show how the chain of States stretched from Berlin to Baghdad. The German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Bulgaria, Turkey. One little strip of territory alone blocked the way and prevented the two ends of the chain from being linked together. That little strip was Serbia. Serbia stood small but defiant between Germany and the great ports of Constantinople and Salonika, holding the gate of the East. Little though we knew or cared in England, Serbia was really the first line of defence of our eastern possessions. If she were crushed or enticed into the 'Berlin–Baghdad' system, then our vast but slightly defended empire would soon have felt the shock of Germany's eastward thrust.

To Germany, therefore, Serbia was an intolerable nuisance. Serbia would not be cajoled into the family of Germany's vassal-states. Therefore, Serbia must be crushed. The Serbs knew well that the Treaty of Bucharest was not the end of war in the Balkans. As soon as the German military preparations were completed, an excuse would not be wanting, and then the Serbs might look to themselves, for the last and most terrible of their wars would burst upon them.

During the year that followed the Balkan wars, South-

Eastern Europe was in a ferment of expectation. The old racial and national antagonisms were more embittered than before. An explosion was expected from day to day. The presence of Prince William of Wied with a crown and a council of ministers and all the apparatus of a modern ruler did not mean that Albania was any quieter than she had ever been. It was not Austria-Hungary's intention that she should be. As long as the Albanians respected neither the authority of their own sovereign nor the rights of other States, there would always be an excuse for the Austro-Hungarian armies to advance in the name of law and order. In the autumn of 1913 the Albanians invaded Serbian territory, and to control the unruly tribesmen the Serbs occupied several strategic positions on the Albanian side of the frontier. They were at once ordered out by Austria-Hungary, and had to submit to Albanian attacks without the possibility of checking them by retaliation.

Bosnia-Hertzegovina had never been resigned to Austrian rule, and since the Serbian victories the two provinces were simmering with discontent. When the country was annexed in 1908 a constitution had been promised, but the parliament that was set up found itself forbidden to control the executive, while the laws it passed had to be sanctioned by the central government. Serbian societies or 'sokols' everywhere kept alive the national spirit, and encouraged the people to resist the germanization or magyarization of their land. Although the Serbian government did not take part in Pan-Serbian agitation over the frontier, many Serbs of Serbia undoubtedly joined with their brothers of Bosnia–Hertzegovina to spread the enthusiasm for 'Greater Serbia'. Unfortunately, the general excitement and the repressive attitude of the government resulted in

frequent attempts at assassination. A people helpless before the overwhelming force of an alien invader will always be tempted to rid themselves of obnoxious rulers by the revolver and the bomb. But we must hope that, whatever the future may bring forth, the Serbs of every country will not again have recourse to such useless methods, which alienate from them the sympathies of those who do not deny their grievances. The result of the general unrest was that in 1912 the provinces were placed under military rule, and in 1913 a state of siege was proclaimed.

Much the same was the condition of Croatia. The old mutual distrust of Croats and Serbs had been steadily disappearing with the growth of the Serbo-Croat coalition. Her victories showed Serbia to be a worthy leader of the Southern Slav crusade, and enthusiasm for Serbia rose high. Here, too, there were repeated attempts at assassination, with the result that the constitution was suspended, and in 1913 the state of siege followed. The blame for these continual disturbances was laid by the Magyars to the account of the Serbian government. But in fact official Serbia was but a passive actor in the drama. It had been her successful revival that turned the hearts of her fellow Slavs towards her. No movement for liberation from Austria-Hungary would have begun but for the tyrannous nationalism of the Magyars. The blame for the Croatian troubles lies really with Count Tisza and the Hungarian government, which has been unable to tolerate Slav nationality alongside its own.

The same disturbance and insecurity existed in Austria. In 1914 the Bohemian constitution was suspended. Trieste was in rebellion against her governor. A bad budget and the prevailing high cost of living added to the general unrest.

But Austria is accustomed to crises of all kinds. Her existence has for long been a juggling performance of no little skill. The government is always engaged in playing off one national interest against another or in devising compromises which will tide over immediate difficulties. As a German professor once said to me, Austria is like the old house in Grimm's *Fairy Tales* which was so rotten that it was on the point of falling down; but as it could not make up its mind which way to fall, it continued to stand. Austria has weathered many storms, and left to herself she would doubtless have found some means of quieting her disturbed provinces and continuing her existence as the Central European Babel where all the races somehow pull together.

But the gamblers of the Central Empires were determined to chance the risks of a world-war. All the struggles and the rivalries of South-Eastern Europe were to be submerged in the sea of German expansion. The Germans of Austria, ardent supporters of Pan-Germanism, saw that success would further secure their predominance in their own country, while failure would only mean their relapse into the German Empire. Behind and controlling the whole plan were the Emperor William and the German government, powerfully seconded by the strong man of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Count Tisza. Our papers have seldom ceased during the war to represent Hungary as a most uneasy partner in the Central European firm, only too anxious to make a separate peace should the opportunity occur. No greater mistake could be made. The Magyars are a minority in their own country, and in order to continue their domination over Slavs and Roumanians they have sought Prussian support and bound themselves to the Prussian alliance.

Hungary, which is ruled by an hereditary aristocracy, sees its whole interest closely tied to Germany's success and to Germany's political ideas. It was Count Tisza and the Magyars as much as any one who brought the war upon us.

At Vienna the direction of Austro-Hungarian policy was nominally in the hands of Count Berchtold, a gentleman, as are most Austrians of high birth, but casual and *dilettante*, more interested in Society, sport, and country life than in the drudgery of a difficult position. Guiding him where they wished were abler men. Count Forgach, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was our old friend of the Friedjung forgeries, a bitter enemy of the Serbs, with a reputation to recover by proving that the Serbs were really an intolerable menace to the Austro-Hungarian State. Working in close touch with him and Tisza was also Count von Tschirschky, the German ambassador, 'the old spider of the Metternichgasse', an inveterate foe of Russia and all Slavs. The old emperor was past taking an active share in the direction of policy, but the heir to the throne, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who was most popular in the army, was known to be in favour of suppressing Serbia once for all by military force. He had rattled the Austrian sabre in 1908–9, and again over Durazzo and Scutari during the Turkish war, and was regarded by the Serbs with profound distrust as being their irreconcilable enemy.

These men were preparing Austria-Hungary for the outbreak of war with Serbia. But across this simple thread in the plot runs another which it is not easy to unravel; and that is the unpopularity of the archduke in various high quarters. The emperor, who was more the representative of the Habsburg family tradition than an individual personality, always resented the marriage of his heir with the

Countess Chotek, who was not of sufficiently exalted rank to enable her to be the wife and mother of emperors. He loathed the thought of being succeeded by Franz Ferdinand, and he had secured the subsequent succession to the young Archduke Karl Franz Joseph (now emperor). But Franz Ferdinand seems also to have been suspect in the eyes of the Hungarian government. Why this was so it is hard to say unless it was that the archduke was connected with the policy known as 'Trialism'. The trialist proposal was to counteract the Southern Slav agitation by creating a third and Yugoslav State, in addition to Austria and Hungary, within the empire. Such a third State would have contained a large part of Hungarian territory and completely shut Hungary off from the sea.

Several conferences took place in the spring of 1914. The two emperors met. The Austrian and German General Staffs conferred. In June the German Emperor, accompanied by Admiral von Tirpitz, visited the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Konopisht in Bohemia. What they said to each other we cannot tell, but it has been conjectured that the attack on Serbia was arranged and the creation of a Magyar-Yugoslav State which would provide a crown for one of Franz Ferdinand's sons.

Immediately after this the archduke went south to attend the grand manœuvres in Bosnia. It was courting danger for the Austrian heir-apparent to visit any province of Serbian nationality at a time when feeling was running high, and the Serbs connected his presence with the Austrian policy of stimulating the Albanian tribes to activity. But it was yet further dangerous for him to enter Sarajevo, as he did, on 'Vidovdan' (St. Vitus's Day, June 28), this being the anniversary of the battle of Kossovo, which the Serbs,

strangely enough, always celebrate as a national festival. The hero of 'Vidovdan' is Milosh Obelitch, who killed the Sultan Murad in his tent on the day of the battle, and there would have been nothing astonishing if some young Bosnian Serb of unstable mind had taken it into his head to emulate that feat by putting an end to a representative of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The Serbs of Bosnia, devoted to the common Serbian cause, saw in the archduke the enemy who encouraged Roman Catholic propaganda at their expense, who had instigated Dr. Friedjung and provided him with forged papers, who had kept Serbia from the sea, and stirred up Bulgaria to the fratricidal war that had destroyed the Balkan League. Attempts at political assassination had been so frequent in recent years in the Southern Slav lands that on the occasion of the old emperor's visit to Sarajevo some years before his safety had been ensured by 1,000 police, and probably by an army of secret agents. It was to be expected, therefore, that every precaution would be taken to protect the heir to the throne, above all in view of the fact that M. Pashitch warned the government on June 21 that he had reason to believe in the existence of a conspiracy in Bosnia. The Serbian authorities also communicated their suspicions of a man called Chabrinovitch, a young anarchist who had lately been in Belgrade where the police would have arrested him but for assurances from Austria-Hungary.

Despite all these indications of the hidden dangers of the Bosnian capital, the arrangements for the archduke's visit seem to have been conceived in a spirit of real or assumed confidence in the people who thronged the streets. Contrary to the usual custom, the police of Sarajevo were ordered to hand over the task of protecting the archduke and his wife to the military. As a matter of fact the exalted pair drove

through the streets with General Potiorek, the military governor, followed by a second motor containing some of their suite, but unaccompanied by any body-guard whatever. As they passed along Chabrinovitch flung a couple of bombs at the leading car. One bomb appears actually to have fallen on the archduke, who with great presence of mind flung it clear. In exploding, it wounded one or two occupants of the second motor. The archduke was not unnaturally incensed at his unpleasant experience, and said as much to the mayor who met him with an address of welcome at the town hall. After the official lunch he proposed a visit to the hospital to which the victims of the morning's outrage had been taken. Several people wisely urged him not to take any more risks. As he hesitated, General Potiorek struck in, 'I know my Bosniaks. There are never two attempts on the same day. You would miss a splendid ovation.'[1] The archduke was persuaded, and started on a second drive through the streets. As the car slowed down to take a corner, a young man called Prinzip stepped off the pavement and with his revolver shot both the archduke and his wife.

The news of the double murder came as a terrible shock to all in Europe who followed the outlines of international politics. In England singularly little interest was shown. Not many people were quite clear as to who the Archduke Franz Ferdinand was. All agreed that a dastardly action had been committed, that something would and ought to be done about it, but that the whole affair was very far away and would soon be forgotten. Following the reports that came from Austria, nearly all our newspapers assumed that the outrage was the work of Serbian revolutionaries from the kingdom, that Austria-Hungary was entitled to demand some

[1] Denis, p. 278.

form of compensation and guarantees for the future and that then all would be calm again.

But those who knew something of South-Eastern Europe saw with the gravest misgivings that here was the very opportunity for which Austria-Hungary had been looking in order to put out her strength and strangle the rising Serbian kingdom. Here surely was the moral justification for Dr. Friedjung, even for Forgach and his forgers. If what the Austrian newspapers said was true, and the murderers had been sent from Serbia to accomplish their errand of death, then surely Europe would be obliged to stand by while condign punishment was meted out. Yet for nearly a month nothing happened. M. Pashitch, in the name of his country, hastened to offer his condolences to the Austro-Hungarian government. He asserted that the crime of Sarajevo was most severely reprobated by all classes of society in Serbia, and that his government would co-operate loyally in bringing to justice any Serbian subjects suspected of complicity in the murder. On July 3 the Serbian Minister at Vienna was able to report to his chief at Belgrade that he had had an interview with Baron Macchio, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and that the Baron had said, 'Nobody accuses the Kingdom of Serbia nor its Government nor the whole Serbian nation'.[1] This sounded promising. But opinion in the Dual Monarchy was being inflamed by the press, and the government did little to control the demonstrations hostile to Serbia. There were riots at Sarajevo, where the Serbian quarter was burned, as well as in the bigger towns of Austria and Hungary. The newspapers persistently referred to the authors of the outrage as 'Serbs', in order to give the impression that they were subjects of King Peter, since the

[1] *Diplomatic Documents*, p. 375; Serbian Blue Book, No. 12.

Serbs of Bosnia had long been officially designated as 'Bosniaks'. They also published wholly fictitious accounts of the assassination of several Hungarian journalists in Serbia, and of a demonstration against the Austro-Hungarian Minister at the funeral of M. Hartwig. Considering that M. Hartwig had been beloved by all Serbs as a true and powerful friend of their nation and that his sudden death while drinking coffee in the Austro-Hungarian Legation was ascribed by Serbian public opinion to poison, it would not have been surprising if the immense crowd that followed the Russian diplomat's coffin to the grave had expressed its indignation against the supposed murderer. As a matter of fact it is clear that these newspaper stories had no foundation; for not only were they officially denied by M. Pashitch,[1] but Freiherr von Giesl, the Austro-Hungarian Minister, in his reports on events at Belgrade prior to July 21, made no more serious complaint than that great bitterness was generally expressed against Austria-Hungary both in the press and in Society.[2] The Serbian press was indeed violent in tone; but, as the Prime Minister pointed out, complete liberty of the press existed in that country. On the other hand, the same excuse could hardly be made for the Austro-Hungarian journals. Nor was opinion in Serbia calmed by learning that the Crown Prince Alexander was receiving almost daily from Austria-Hungary letters threatening him with death.[3]

Meanwhile the inquiry into the facts of the murder proceeded at Sarajevo in secret. At first this did not prevent the Hungarian papers from publishing certain 'confessions' of the prisoners incriminating various persons in Serbia, espe-

[1] *Diplomatic Documents*, p. 380; Serbian Blue Book, No. 21.
[2] Ibid., p. 451; Austro-Hungarian Red Book, No. 6.
[3] Ibid., p. 378; Serbian Blue Book, No. 18.

cially General Yankovitch, the president of the 'Narodna Odbrana'. Suddenly, in the middle of July, these reports and revelations ceased in obedience to the government's orders, and the press began to represent the whole affair not as a trial of individuals but as an international affair which must ultimately be settled by war. It is surely not an unnatural surmise to suppose that this change of policy was dictated by the course of the trial. At first the Austro-Hungarian authorities expected no doubt to discover proofs of Serbian official complicity in a great plot. As they found themselves unable to trace the murder to the quarters required, they turned the attention of the public from the facts concerned with the murders towards incitement of a general kind against Serbia as a perpetual menace to Austria-Hungary.

Nevertheless no very serious consequences were expected. The Serbian Minister at Vienna thought on July 15 that Austria-Hungary was preparing a note to Serbia in which that nation would be ordered to give guarantees of neighbourly behaviour, and also a circular note to the Great Powers asking for their support to this end.[1] The Austro-Hungarian government was so reassuring that the Russian ambassador at Vienna left his post to go on leave, the President of the French Republic with his Foreign Minister paid a visit to Petrograd, while M. Pashitch and other Serbian ministers left Belgrade for the interior in connexion with the approaching elections. It was at this moment that the blow fell from Vienna, like thunder out of a clear sky. On July 23 the famous ultimatum was handed to M. Pashitch's substitute at Belgrade. This document accused Serbia of having tolerated and even encouraged anti-Austrian propa-

[1] *Diplomatic Documents*, p. 383; Serbian Blue Book, No. 25.

ganda for the previous five years, of retaining in her service officers who had engineered the murder at Sarajevo, and of having supplied the conspirators with weapons from the State arsenal at Kraguyevatz. The note contained demands formulated in ten clauses asking for the suppression of notoriously anti-Austrian societies in Serbia, the dismissal from the State service of officials guilty of anti-Austrian proceedings, the arrest of two individuals, the suppression of illicit traffic in arms over the frontier, apologies for certain hostile utterances of public men since June 28, and the admission of Austro-Hungarian representatives to assist in the suppression of propagandist societies and in the trial of persons suspected of complicity in the murder. The Serbian government was called upon to accept the note in its entirety within the space of forty-eight hours from 6.0 p.m. on July 23, failing which the acting Serbian Prime Minister was informed that diplomatic relations would be suspended.

Before considering the Serbian reply to these proposals, let us return and examine some of the details concerning the murder itself. Who killed Franz Ferdinand ? Or rather, on whom does the ultimate responsibility for his death rest ? The Austro-Hungarian official case is that the murder was perpetrated by Serbs—Bosnian Serbs, it is true, but recently resident in Serbia—and that the authors of the two attempts used bombs emanating from Kraguyevatz and Browning pistols given to them in Serbia. The case certainly looks black at first sight and points to Serbian complicity, though the evidence after all had only been produced in the course of a secret trial whose proceedings have never been published.

On the other hand, let us apply a test which is much to the point. To whose interest were the results brought about by the crime ? Manifestly not to the interest of the Serbian

kingdom, which had just emerged impoverished and exhausted from two wars. Nothing could have been more disastrous for Serbia at such a time than to provoke a conflict with a neighbouring Great Power, particularly under circumstances that would alienate the opinion of every civilized State. For the Central Empires, however, the violent death of the archduke provided just the needful excuse for the suppression of independent Serbia. The change in the succession to the Habsburg crown from Franz Ferdinand to the young Karl Franz Joseph was known by all to be most gratifying to the old emperor, while the murder of the advocate of Trialism could not but be acceptable to Hungarian nationalists, who had been infuriated by the late archduke's plans for a Southern Slav monarchy. Considerations of policy therefore would show that Serbia had no interest in the crime, while powerful forces in Central Europe would have been inclined to welcome and profit by it. Of course an enlightened view of national interests cannot be expected from all Serbian individuals. But what we may consider ourselves entitled to assume is that the Serbian government would view the situation calmly and be unlikely to permit its subordinates to draw down well-merited punishment on their country.

But there are details to consider, and though we cannot pretend to penetrate the obscurity in which the whole affair is wrapped, the examination of some of the facts may help us to form a provisional estimate of the guilty parties, pending the publication of decisive proofs.

First of all, then, why were no precautions taken to protect the life of the archduke in so dangerous a spot as Sarajevo ? Why was Chabrinovitch not arrested when denounced by the Serbian government as a dangerous character ? or at least,

why was not some check placed on his freedom of movement? Why were no escort and no police provided to guard the archduke on his drive through the streets? After the crime the president of the Bosnian Diet made the most extraordinary revelations. There were, it appears, two bombs under the table of the dining-room, and a third in the chimney.[1] It is hardly possible to imagine that any police force would overlook the presence of little things like that stuck about a dining-room that was to receive royalty. The presence of the bombs, to my mind, points to an attempt, made either before or after the murder, to prove the existence of a widespread conspiracy.

There are other suspicious points in the attitude of the Austro-Hungarian authorities. General Potiorek was the man who innocently or deliberately sent the archduke to his death. Why was not the general broken, or placed on the retired list? Why does he appear soon afterwards at the head of the great army that invaded Serbia in November?

Again, a Serbian officer tells me that he saw a postcard sent from Sarajevo a few days before the fatal Sunday to a brother officer in Serbia. On the card was a message to the effect that 'Vidovdan' was approaching and that then it would be known who was true and who was not. On it was also drawn a little plan of the streets of Sarajevo, with dots at the very points where the attempts took place. Now there was the strictest censorship on the Serbo-Bosnian frontier. So carefully had the frontier been guarded that the Serbs declared that the birds could not fly over it. Who would be fool enough to post so incriminating a document, knowing that it would have to run the gauntlet of a searching examination? Yet bombs, pistols, and conspirators' correspondence

[1] Denis, p. 279.

crossed that frontier quite easily. Once more, it looks as though the Austro-Hungarian police had been allowing criminal preparations to go on, and even adding a touch or two to the evidence.

As recently as last April the *Écho de Paris* published an article which throws a weight of suspicion on the Hungarian government.[1] According to the writer the *Commissaire central* of Zagreb a month before the murder received two warnings of a plot, with names. The Croatian government proceeded at once to advise the government at Buda-Pesth. A third warning from Dr. Marco Gagliardi, a well-known Serbophil of Zagreb, was also transmitted to the Hungarian capital. Yet nothing was done. The blame for this inactivity ascends to the highest quarters and must rest on the Premier, Count Tisza. Either he did not know of the warnings, in which case it is odd that he did not censure his subordinates when the facts became public, or else he knew and deliberately let events follow their course.

M. Hinkovitch, one of the heroes of the Zagreb conspiracy trial, adds to our suspicion of the Hungarian government. In a pamphlet published in London, he declares that the priest Locali, leader of the Transylvanian Roumanian party, promised in December 1915 to publish documentary proof that Count Tisza and certain other officials were responsible for the crime.[2]

The fact that tells most heavily against the Austro-Hungarian official case is the secrecy in which the trial of the culprits has from the beginning been wrapped. Why has that damning evidence, on which the ultimatum purported to be based, never been given to the world ? And how curious it

[1] *Écho de Paris*, April 13, 1917.

[2] Hinković, p. 18.

was that, as the trial proceeded and the evidence no doubt came to light, the newspapers of the Dual Monarchy were forbidden to publish the 'confessions' of the prisoners, as they had at first been allowed to do!

One last point. The antipathy of the emperor and the imperial family for the late archduke and his wife was conspicuously shown in the circumstances of their funeral. No wreaths were sent. The ceremony had nothing of the character of a public event, and would have been almost unattended but for the unexpected presence of the present emperor and a number of young members of the noble families of Austria, who resented 'the burial of the dog' accorded to their late Commander-in-Chief and Crown-Prince. The emperor's master of the ceremonies forgot nothing that could show indifference to the fate of the deceased. Beside the coffin of the murdered princess lay only a fan and a pair of white gloves, the insignia of her 'true' station in life, that of a lady-in-waiting.

In all this there is no positive proof. The mystery has points that baffle the most cock-sure. But on the strength of the arguments here put forward I think an opinion can be based. It is that the murder was the work of one or two fanatics of Serbian race, but of Austro-Hungarian allegiance, who were roused to fury by the unsympathetic treatment of the Orthodox inhabitants of Bosnia-Hertzegovina; that these Serbs or Bosniaks were probably in touch with 'comitadjis' of Serbia, who were ignorant of Europe and did not realize with what inflammable material they were playing, that the Serbian government and public services in general did not know what was being prepared; but that the Austro-Hungarian government did know and used the plot as a Heaven-sent means to remove an undesirable heir to

the throne and to incriminate Serbia in the eyes of the world.

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Having decided on the course to be followed, the statesmen of Vienna brought about the rupture with overwhelming suddenness and rapidity. On the very day that the ultimatum was presented Baron Macchio had an interview with the French ambassador, and never dropped the slightest hint of what was to be done that afternoon at Belgrade. Serbia—and with her also the Powers friendly to her—had only forty-eight hours in which to consider and accept a note of considerable length and many points. It is worth noticing that even if Serbia accepted the whole of the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum, she was still to be called upon to pay for the Austro-Hungarian mobilization. In the same way might a bully demand an apology for an imaginary insult, and, on receiving it, insist that the victim should pay for the stick with which the necessary intimidation had been performed.

To the ultimatum was annexed a series of findings of the criminal court at Sarajevo. If all the charges there put forward are true, the greater part of the Austro-Hungarian demands are but reasonable measures of self-protection. But the whole document was the product of the Foreign Office of Vienna, assisted by von Tschirschky and Tisza. It was surely too much to ask of the governments of Europe that they should accept in two days, that is to say, after the most cursory examination, accusations brought forward by the most notorious forger of recent years, Count Forgach. Austria-Hungary indeed took up the attitude that the matter only concerned herself and Serbia. But she laid her grievances before all the Powers, and in any case Serbia herself had the right to ask that the charges should be substantiated. The

Russian Foreign Minister pointed out the futility of submitting the case against Serbia to his government after the ultimatum had been dispatched. To which the Austro-Hungarian ambassador replied that the results attained by the investigation at Sarajevo ' were quite sufficient for our procedure in this matter ',[1] and that the information had only been laid before the Powers for Austria-Hungary's public justification. Thus, while loudly protesting her innocence and parading her grievances, Austria-Hungary gave neither Serbia nor Europe an opportunity of judging the truth of her statements.

Yet, despite the bullying tone of the ultimatum and its unsupported charges, Serbia acted on the advice of her more powerful friends and returned an unexpectedly humble and accommodating reply. Out of the ten demands eight were in substance accepted, though with a number of verbal alterations which Austria-Hungary used to support her case. The ' Narodna Odbrana ' was to be dissolved ; all anti-Habsburg propaganda shown by Austria-Hungary to exist in Serbian schools and colleges was to be suppressed ; any military officers denounced for the same offence would be tried and, if guilty, cashiered ; one of the individuals named had already been arrested ; the other, an Austro-Hungarian subject, the government had not been able to arrest ; the proofs of their guilt were asked with a view to their trial ; energetic measures were promised against any illicit traffic in arms across the frontier ; explanations would be given of any anti-Habsburg utterances of Serbian public officials. What then did Serbia refuse ? Clauses 5 and 6 of the ultimatum had insisted on the admission of Austro-Hungarian delegates to assist in the suppression of hostile propaganda

[1] *Diplomatic Documents*, p. 458 ; Austro-Hungarian Red Book, No. 14.

and in the trial of persons suspected of complicity in the murder. Here were demands that could not be granted without the sacrifice of Serbia's national independence. As M. Sazonov said, Serbia would no longer be master in her own house if she submitted to such control. 'You will always be wanting to intervene again,' he said to the Austro-Hungarian ambassador, 'and what a life you will lead Europe.'[1] Yet even so, the Serbian refusal of these two clauses was studiously non-provocative. The Serbian government agreed to 'such collaboration as agrees with the principle of international law, with criminal procedure and with good neighbourly relations', and, while refusing the services of Austro-Hungarian delegates in the murder trials, agreed to try any persons accused by Austria-Hungary and to inform her of the results of the investigations. Finally, should this almost abject reply not be acceptable to Vienna, Serbia suggested that the matter should be referred to the Hague Tribunal or to the Great Powers who had ended the crisis of 1909 by drawing up the declaration then made by the Serbian government. Three days later the *chargé d'affaires* at Rome even told our ambassador that Serbia would probably accept the whole of the ultimatum if she were informed exactly as to what powers were claimed for the Austro-Hungarian delegates in the investigations on Serbian territory.

But the ultimatum had been sent in order that it might be rejected. No other explanation of the treatment of Serbia's reply is possible. M. Pashitch handed his answer to Freiherr von Giesl at 5.45 p.m. on Saturday, July 25. We have already seen that it was of such a nature as to deserve the most careful consideration from any government desirous of keeping the peace. Yet on returning to his

[1] *Diplomatic Documents*, p. 458; Austro-Hungarian Red Book, No. 14.

office M. Pashitch received a note from the Austro-Hungarian Minister informing him that the Serbian reply was not satisfactory and that diplomatic relations were accordingly broken off. The Minister, with the entire staff of the Legation, quitted Serbian territory by special train the same evening, showing thereby that every preparation had been made on the assumption that war would be forced upon Serbia. On July 28 Count Berchtold sent the Serbian government a formal declaration of war.

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In England we could hardly believe the seriousness of the situation. There had been so many Balkan crises engineered from Vienna. Surely this one would subside like the others. But our Foreign Secretary was alarmed at the rapidity with which events had developed. He had done his utmost to induce Germany and Austria-Hungary to agree to a conference of the Powers to discuss the ultimatum. He now said that he had hoped that the Serbian reply would furnish a basis for discussion and agreement. To this Count Berchtold answered that Serbia had ordered her mobilization on July 25. 'Up to then we had made no military preparations, but by the Serbian mobilization we were compelled to do so.'[1] So Sir Edward Grey was to understand that Austria-Hungary, with all her immense forces ready on the Bosnian frontier, was afraid that Serbia would invade her territories!

On July 28, after informing the ambassador at Petrograd that war had been declared that day, Count Berchtold went on to say that this step had been rendered necessary by the enemy's attack on the Hungarian frontier. Yet it is curious to observe that in his declaration of war Count

[1] Ibid., p. 517, No. 39.

Berchtold said nothing about any Serbian acts of hostility, and confined himself to the unsatisfactory nature of the reply to the ultimatum.[1]

The fact was that Austria-Hungary felt her golden opportunity had come. While the memory of the murdered archduke was still fresh she must hustle Serbia into war. If there was any delay the Serbs might be able to prove their innocence, or at least the Powers would discover a compromise and so preserve the independence and integrity of the Serbian State. That was what Austria-Hungary had no intention of allowing. Serbia was not merely to become a vassal of Vienna as in the days of King Milan. She was now to be stripped of territory and rendered helpless. The Italian government was informed on July 30 that Austria-Hungary could not promise to respect the territorial integrity of Serbia.[2] Thus, while the cabinets of Great Britain, France, Italy, and Russia were striving to prevent a general conflagration and sending notes in every direction, the Austro-Hungarian guns were already bombarding the defenceless streets and houses of Belgrade.

As the Hungarian newspaper, *Pesti Hirlap*, acknowledged in its issue of June 28, 1916, the war was thrust upon Serbia by Austria-Hungary. 'To-day', ran the article, 'we can frankly say that the cause of this war was not the tragedy of Sarajevo . . . but we saw that we were obliged to finish once for all with the Serbian agitation, which after the Balkan wars had become insupportable . . .'[3] That was part

[1] *Diplomatic Documents*, pp. 515 and 518; Austro-Hungarian Red Book, Nos. 37 and 40.

[2] Denis, p. 289. Quoted from a speech by Signor Salandra, June 2, 1915. It was on this issue, the intention of Austria-Hungary to violate the territorial settlement of the Balkans, that Italy drew away from the Triple Alliance.

[3] Quoted in Kuhne, p. 279.

of the issue. Austria-Hungary saw in Serbia the potential deliverer of the Southern Slavs. There can be no doubt that there was much Southern Slav agitation in which some Serbs of Serbia were taking part. But Austria-Hungary's remedy was not necessarily war. By Trialism, or any other federal form of government that would have allowed justice and liberty to the Serbo-Croats of the Empire, the Serbian danger might have been avoided. Austria-Hungary, however, had further ambitions. She now felt herself strong enough to break down the Serbian barrier that stood between herself and the East. If we can feel some sympathy for an antiquated imperial system beset by rising national forces, we can have none for an aggressive and disingenuous government which seeks to destroy a neighbouring State for the offence of being situated across an advantageous trade-route.

But if we lay the blame for the first hostilities upon Austria-Hungary, the main responsibility for the spread of the war to all the Great Powers of the world lies elsewhere. It became clear at once to the diplomats of Vienna that they had not only to reckon with Serbia. As soon as he received the news that war was declared, the Serbian Minister at Petrograd addressed on July 28 an appeal for help to Russia. 'In bringing to your notice', he wrote to M. Sazonov, 'the act that a Great Power has had the sorry courage to commit against a little Slav country which has scarcely emerged from a long series of heroic and exhausting struggles, I take the liberty, in circumstances of such gravity for my country, of expressing the hope that this act, which breaks the peace and outrages the conscience of Europe, will be condemned by the whole civilized world and severely punished by Russia, Serbia's protector.'[1] The Russian

[1] *Le Livre bleu serbe*, No. 47, p. 64.

reply was an assurance that Serbia would not be left to her fate. That meant a certainty of European war, and Austria-Hungary appears to have wished to draw back before the prospect of such a cataclysm. On July 31 our Foreign Office learned with relief that Vienna and Petrograd had resumed their abandoned negotiations, and that the former was prepared to guarantee the independence and integrity of Serbia. Despite the contrary declaration at Rome, to which we have referred, it is possible to believe that Austria-Hungary was in earnest, and wished at the last moment to avoid the overwhelming consequence of her late action by a dignified withdrawal. Too late! Germany had arranged a European war and was not to be baulked by the discretion of her ally. Although not herself a party to the quarrel, she stepped in and declared war upon Russia on August 1. In the last resort it was the firm will and inhuman policy of Berlin that drove Austria-Hungary to the logical issue of her Pan-German policy. Instead of sending what she had called 'a punitive expedition' to give the naughty boys of Serbia a sound thrashing, Austria-Hungary found that she had created a world-war.

Our generation will not forget the crowded emotions of those first days of August 1914. When Germany challenged Russia, France declared her faithfulness to her ally. Italy showed the hollowness of the German claim to be on the defensive by refusing to support the Central Empires. Everywhere was feverish haste to be prepared for the first shock. Amongst ourselves the rising indignation at German aggression was still checked by the passionate desire even at the last moment to deliver the world from the tidal wave of horror that was about to burst. Military enthusiasm was to most of us a distant virtue of past history. We breathed

an atmosphere of 'live and let live', and were strangers to the irreconcilable conflicts of the continental races. Yet it was impossible to stand by and see France crushed, as German writers had announced that she must inevitably be. As we halted between a generous longing to plunge into the common struggle against the disturber of Europe and the peaceful traditions of four generations, there came the news of Belgium violated. Here was the crime which we had said we would not tolerate. The tension of uncertainty was over, and the nation as a whole, with many regrets, but with the fervour of crusaders, applauded its rulers' decision to enter the lists and to forge again the sword of Britain for the cause of European liberties and international justice.

8

The Austrian War

Znaite, moyi druzi boyni ;
' Shvaba ' nama yamu kopa,
Al' che u nyu pasti glupo,—
Ta, c nama ye sva Evropa ! (Vlada Popovitch, 1914.)

' Know, my comrades in arms,
The German is digging our grave ;
But on him shall his folly fall,—
All Europe stands by our side.'

Serbia had tried to avoid war by abasing herself before her enemy, for her government knew how unready the country was for another struggle after the losses of the previous two years. They appreciated the dangers by which Serbia was surrounded. Roumania under a Hohenzollern king and largely pro-German ; Bulgaria waiting eagerly for the moment of revenge for the Treaty of Bucharest ; the Albanian tribes in the pay of Austria-Hungary and ready to raid the southern Serbian districts ; Greece the ally, with a government loyal to its agreements, but with a court-party tied to Germany and large sections of public opinion only anxious at any cost to avoid further war.

Still more immediately serious were the deficiencies in the army. The new divisions, which were being raised from Old Serbia and Macedonia, as yet existed only on paper, and could not take the places of the men who had fallen in the Balkan wars. The stock of munitions was depleted, and it was impossible to get an adequate supply at such

a moment, when other nations had none to spare. In the fighting that followed Serbian regiments frequently went into the firing-line with only one rifle for every two men.

It was a moral certainty that any resistance which Serbia might offer would be crushed by superior numbers. There could hardly be any doubt about this. In the days just before the outbreak of war the diplomatists of the Entente tried to induce Austria-Hungary to place a territorial limit beyond which her 'punitive expedition' should not go. Herr von Zimmermann, the German Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, said that had Russia not entered the war, Austria-Hungary could have contented herself with occupying Belgrade and would then have reopened negotiations.[1] As it was, Serbia did not have to face her enemy alone. Still Austria-Hungary dispatched large forces against her, and the European nations, if they gave any thought to the Serbs in those first crowded days of the war, expected to see them slowly driven backwards through their own country and forced to retire to the south or to capitulate.

Instead of that Serbia offered a resistance that astonished the world. Three times the enemy's armies crossed her frontier and penetrated into the interior. Each effort ended in failure and retirement. Austria-Hungary had to wait four months for her occupation of Belgrade, and then she was driven from the town after holding it for only thirteen days. By the close of the year there was not an Austrian soldier on Serbian soil—or, as Voivoda Putnik, who loved accuracy, more correctly said, there was not an Austrian soldier at liberty. There were in Serbia some 70,000 Austrian prisoners.

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[1] *Diplomatic Documents*, p. 394; Serbian Blue Book, No. 51.

After the precipitate haste of the Austro-Hungarian government in declaring war the general staff appear to have followed their traditional dilatory methods. The bombardment of Belgrade, an open town, began on July 30. In the words of a poem in the *Anthology of Humorous Verse*:

'An Austrian army awfully arrayed
Boldly by battery besieged Belgrade,'

and so opened the long series of violations of international law which we have witnessed in the past three years. But for some days no large military movement was made. The Serbian ministry had left the capital on the night of July 25, accompanied by the diplomatic corps and a host of officials and others. Nish became the seat of government and centre of the nation's life. The army stood on the defensive, choosing its ground and prepared if necessary to allow the enemy to cross the frontier that he might be the more decisively beaten. Yet, despite the weak forces that defended Belgrade, the Austro-Hungarian attempts to cross the rivers in that region were repulsed with heavy losses. The enemy then made their main advance against the Matchva, the district in the extreme north-west of Serbia, lying in the angle between the Save and the Drina. On August 12 they crossed the frontier from Hungary and Bosnia, and advanced on a sixty-kilometre front between Krupanj and Shabatz. The Serbs, who were heavily outnumbered, fell back and abandoned most of the Matchva. Already by August 14 the victories of the Austro-Hungarian army were being celebrated in Vienna. Their flanks protected by the two rivers, the enemy moved confidently forward, expecting to end the campaign in a few weeks. The campaign ended even sooner than they had anticipated. The Serbs gave battle on August 17, hurled themselves with irresistible dash

at the Austro-Hungarian centre, and occupied the ridge of the Tser mountains. A week of desperate fighting ensued, and then the Serbs drove the divided halves of the invading army westward down the Yadar river and northward to the Save. By August 24 the country had been cleared of the enemy. Serbia, the despised little Balkan State, had registered the first successful blow at the Central Empires. The fruits of victory were represented, according to the lowest estimate, by 50 guns, 4,000 prisoners, and a large supply of war material of all kinds abandoned by the enemy in his flight. The Austro-Hungarian government was humorous enough to announce that the imperial and royal army, having made a successful incursion into Serbian territory, had achieved its object and had thereupon retired from the country.

But as the Serbian army re-entered the villages of the Matchva they were horrified to find that atrocities of the most savage and barbarous kind had been inflicted upon the unfortunate inhabitants. The Serbs had recently fought Turks, Bulgars, and Albanians. They were accustomed to the horrors of war. But in the Matchva they found the evidence not merely of war but of systematic and organized crime. They had for years been denounced and despised as savages by the prophets of German-Magyar civilization. They had expected a scrupulous consideration for harmless non-combatants from the soldiers of a State which assumed this tone of lofty superiority. Instead they found that Austria-Hungary had made war upon women and children and aged men, upon private property and upon whole villages, without distinction of innocent from guilty.

We, too, in England had not expected to hear of indiscriminate brutality committed by Austro-Hungarian troops.

A very real regard for those races of the Dual Monarchy known to us, and especially for the officers of the army, was widespread amongst us. When the first horrible rumours of German doings in Belgium and France reached us we did not believe them. When they grew into certainties, as the official commissions gave their evidence, and we heard stories at first-hand from the men who were at Mons, we thought some madness must have overtaken the rulers of Germany. We were sure that they must be unique: that an Austro-Hungarian army would not behave with such barbarity. But Dr. Reiss, of Lausanne, has published a book, now translated into English, containing the evidence which he collected on the spot after the retreat of the Austro-Hungarians. Though we may comfort ourselves with the reflection that many officers and men probably hated the tasks which they were called upon to perform, we cannot but profoundly regret that an army which we had always considered a school for gentlemen should have been thus disgraced in its corporate capacity.

The troops had for many years past been taught that the Serbs were a race of barbarous savages, animated by vindictive greed and unrestrained by any moral or humane considerations. The name of the 'Zimun tradition' had been given to the consistent picture of Serbian arrogance and brutality disseminated by the Austro-Hungarian journalists, whose business it was to pick up or invent scandal in Belgrade and then to cross the river and dispatch their tit-bits from Zimun in Hungary. In the army the officers had instructed their men on the same lines, and possibly the majority of all ranks entirely believed the legend so assiduously preached. An Austrian lieutenant told Dr. Reiss that when he saw himself unable to escape

capture he had determined to shoot himself. But the instinct of self-preservation had prevailed, and he had surrendered, fully expecting the most barbarous treatment. 'To-day', he said, 'I am glad that I did not do it (i. e. commit suicide), because Col. Ilitch is like a father to us.'[1] Other officers also declared that they were extremely well treated. At Nish, which was a sort of prisoners' general head-quarters, the officers inhabited a large barrack situated in a park, and were provided with books, pianos, a canteen, and a field for outdoor sports.[2] Those who were in Serbia in 1915 with the various British medical missions tell us the same story.

It was not always possible to treat captured Austro-Hungarian officers with the deference that some of them appear to have expected. A certain captain was highly indignant at not being at once conveyed to Serbian general head-quarters. If the Serbs had the honour to capture an imperial and royal officer, the least they could do should be to send him at once by motor-car to their General Staff. It had to be gently explained to him that while motors were scarce among the Serbs, Austro-Hungarian officer prisoners were numerous. This, however, did not reconcile the captain to such a humiliating mode of transport as the Serbian bullock-wagons.

Of course, Serbia was poor and her peasants are accustomed to rougher fare than satisfies the peoples of Austria-Hungary. Consequently, many of the men among the prisoners suffered considerable hardship. But they were treated as well as circumstances would allow. They received, even in the early days of the great retreat, the same food as the Serbian soldiers themselves. As far as possible they were given not

[1] Reiss, p. 174.

[2] Sturzenegger, p. 75.

uncongenial employment. Many served as orderlies in the various hospitals and realized how much better off they were than in the army of the Monarchy. At Skoplye in the officers' club there was an orchestra of prisoners who received higher pay than that of the Serbian army.

Yet all this was after those first terrible days of the war in which the Austro-Hungarian troops had loosed upon the Matchva the same terror that was then sweeping over Belgium. Into the details of what was done it is unnecessary to enter. They may be read in Dr. Reiss's book. The important thing is to fix the blame, as far as we can.

Austria-Hungary's first line of defence, after she admitted the general truth that great severity had been shown in the Matchva, was that such a course was rendered necessary by the active hostility of the civil population. But, granted the truth of this assertion, it would then follow that those guilty of hostile acts should alone be executed. Yet Dr. Reiss was able to trace the evidence for the execution of 306 women. If it be replied that women are often as capable as men of becoming *francs-tireurs* and firing from houses and behind hedges, is the same claimed for old people over eighty years of age or for children of under five? The list of victims covers every age from one to ninety-five.

Again, should any civilians be proved guilty of hostile acts, their punishment is universally recognized by civilized nations. They should be shot. What are we to make of a list of victims half of whom were clubbed to death, hanged, burned, or mutilated. Sixty-eight persons with eyes put out and thirty-four with noses cut off take some explanation.

The next Austro-Hungarian justification is that a few of the worst elements of the army got out of hand and gave free rein to their passions. This is what might happen in any

army and probably occurred to some slight extent in this case. But it is not, I think, difficult to show that the real responsibility lies elsewhere. The Austro-Hungarian soldiers were provided with tins of an inflammable liquid with which they sprinkled houses before setting fire to them.[1] That is not the act of a few unruly hooligans. With the invading army were brought a number of Mohammedan and Croatian civilians of the lowest class who set the example of indiscriminate pillage and whose lead could hardly fail to be followed by the troops. The High Command ordered that hostages should be taken in the occupied districts and executed if a single shot were fired at the troops in that locality; also that any persons encountered on the country-side were to be considered suspect and shot at once if they showed any sign of hostility to the invaders. The General Officer Commanding the Ninth Corps ordered that all non-uniformed but armed men should be shot at sight.[2] This bore hardly on an army like the Serbian, in which the second and third lines had no uniforms at any time and in which the recruits raised for this war could only be supplied with cartridges and old battered rifles.

Then there is the evidence of Austro-Hungarian soldiers themselves. For instance, Dr. Reiss describes how a soldier of the Ninety-seventh Regiment of the line informed him that in the first invasion of August 1914 their orders were to burn and kill in every direction and without distinction. When they again entered Serbia, later on, they were only permitted to loot.[3]

An Italian journalist, who was acting as war-correspondent with the Austro-Hungarian army on the Galician front in the first few weeks of the war, tells how an officer arrived there

[1] Reiss, p. 22.

[2] Ibid., pp. 182 and 183.

[3] Ibid., p. 177.

transferred from the army that had invaded Serbia. This officer was indignant at the manner in which the High Command had ordered the systematic wasting of Serbia. He said, 'Our orders were to kill and destroy every one and everything. That is not humanity. They are brigands.' [1]

The army could hardly fail in some measure to earn this denunciation considering the incitements to brutality issued by the High Command. The attitude and intentions of the Austro-Hungarian military chiefs may be summed up in the words of the order issued by the commander of the Ninth Corps: 'In dealing with a population of this kind (i. e. the Serbs) all humanity and kindness of heart are out of place, they are even harmful. . . . I therefore give orders that, during the entire course of the war, an attitude of extreme severity, extreme harshness, and extreme distrust is to be observed towards everybody.' [2] Imagine any such order being issued by one of our own generals. The commanders of invading armies are called upon to show solicitude for the civil population concerned and to protect them against the rougher elements amongst their own troops. Here was a high command only anxious lest its army should prove civilized and humane, and urging the men to steel their hearts against the promptings of mercy. It was not the wildness of a few baser natures, but deliberate policy of their chiefs that was responsible for the cruelties inflicted by the troops in the Matchva. The Austro-Hungarian army was dispatched for more than the vaunted 'punitive expedition'. During that short fortnight it was engaged in a veritable war of extermination. This art of war had been learned in Berlin. Superb contempt of neighbouring peoples, war upon women and children, wholesale destruction of property, these are the

[1] Fraccaroli, p. 126. [2] Reiss, p. 181.

precepts of that new school of warriors who have done their best to destroy the traditions of Christendom and to exclude all moral considerations from the conflicts of nations.

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On the heels of the retreating Austro-Hungarians the Serbs crossed the rivers and entered Bosnia and southern Hungary, while the Montenegrins pressed northwards into Hertzegovina. It was an intoxicating moment. Not only had the Serbs defended the soil of free Serbia, but now they had swept out into the empire of their powerful adversary and appeared as deliverers amongst their subject brethren of the ' Greater Serbia ' that was to be. In many districts they found themselves in the midst of a pure Serbian and Orthodox population, which received them with demonstrations of welcome. Many were the sentences of death, imprisonment, or confiscation of property afterwards pronounced by various courts of the monarchy on its Serbian subjects for their reception of King Peter's army. But at the moment fortune seemed to smile on the Allied cause in eastern Europe. Though on the distant western front the German rush was not yet definitely repulsed from the heart of France, in the east the Russians were unexpectedly successful and the Austro-Hungarian offensive in Poland had become a struggle for the defence of Galicia. In Bosnia the Serbs pressed on till they were encamped on the hills round Sarajevo, and feasted their eyes on the beautiful city which they hoped soon to make their own.

But the Habsburg monarchy was too powerful an adversary to be lightly attacked. Despite the Russian offensive Austro-Hungarian military pride could not submit to defeat at the hands of the despised ' barbarians ' of the Balkans. A second advance on Serbia was undertaken in September, and

the Serbian army had to fall back and offer battle on its own ground. With them went a large number of Serbian families from Syrmia and Bosnia to avoid the natural penalties for having fraternized with their late invaders. These refugees, whose destitution was relieved by public subscriptions through the newspapers, constituted a serious drain on the slender resources of the country.

Yet the Austro-Hungarians were at first held on the western frontier of Serbia and were unable to advance far from the river banks where they were covered by the guns of their own monitors. At one point only did the new offensive seem likely to achieve success. Round Loznitza the Serbs had but a small force. Throwing their troops on this gap in the defence the Austro-Hungarians steadily advanced during the middle of September. Suffering terrible losses owing to their attacks in close formation, but constantly replenishing their ranks with fresh troops, they pushed on towards Valyevo, which their general had promised to enter on September 20. A moment of suspense ensued while the fate of central Serbia, and therefore of Belgrade, still heroically defying all assaults, hung in the balance. Then a desperate fight at Rozhan turned the tide of invasion and the Austro-Hungarians were obliged to fall back on the Guchevo hills. Protected there by big guns on the Bosnian side of the Drina, they were able to beat off the Serbian attacks, and prepare for yet another effort.

During October there was desultory fighting along the frontiers. The Serbs attempted an invasion of Bosnia in order to compel their enemy to retire from Serbian soil. But the difficulties of supply and transport in that wild country were too formidable and the Serbian army too small to run the risk of detaching forces adequate to the task.

Meanwhile the Serbian retirement from Syrmia enabled the Austro-Hungarians to continue their bombardment of Belgrade, which seemed likely to become completely wrecked.

In November the enemy launched their third and greatest invasion. General Potiorek, at the head of five army corps and two supplementary divisions, resumed the attack from the north-west. The situation was again critical. The Serbian troops were in the marshy plains between the Drina and the Save. The roads on which they depended for supplies had been broken up and rendered almost impassable by three months of war. The supply of ammunition was steadily dwindling. A withdrawal of the whole line was clearly necessary, despite the depressing effect of such strategy upon the army and the civil population. It was necessary to give the Austro-Hungarians a taste of the difficulties of the country. 'All my strategy', said Voivoda Putnik in reference to this campaign, 'consisted in placing between the enemy's fighting-line and their impedimenta the Serbian national mud.'[1]

The decision was amply justified. Many of the Austro-Hungarian troops suffered terribly from hunger owing to the partial breakdown of their commissariat. Yet despite the geographical obstacles they continued to advance into Shumadia, supported by their numerous and powerful artillery. Driven from Rozhan, the Serbs abandoned Valyevo and retired to the hills that separate the valleys of the Kolubara and the Morava. The news of the fall of Valyevo was greeted with enthusiasm in Vienna, where it was supposed to indicate the collapse of the Serbian resistance. General Potiorek was decorated with a new order specially inaugurated in honour of his triumph.

[1] Petrovitch, p. 208.

But the Serbian army was still intact, though the dangers of the situation caused the General Staff to order the evacuation of Belgrade and a concentration to the south along the Rudnik range of mountains. At the beginning of December Serbia seemed to be at her last gasp. The Austro-Hungarians made their long-expected triumphal entry into Belgrade. Kraguyevatz seemed certain to fall. The enemy moved large reinforcements into the lower Morava valley to make certain of Nish and so to cut off the Serbian retreat along the line of the railway. Worse still, the munitions were known to be almost exhausted; whole batteries were reduced to six rounds per gun. Worst of all was the moral effect of continued retreat. The Serbian peasant-soldier, seeing his familiar country-side in the possession of the enemy, began in many cases to lose confidence in superiors who would not offer battle. A little nation that had risen to renewed life after 400 years of death, and had struggled through endless difficulties towards liberty and unity, seemed on the brink of destruction. A more powerful and organized foe than any she had yet encountered had her by the throat. The nations of the West, still unprepared for war on the necessary scale, were unable to send forces to her support, nor could they have arrived in time had they been available. Serbia's doom was surely sealed. All her efforts were to end in submission to the empire which already misgoverned her co-nationals. All that the friends of Serbia could do was to avert their eyes in sorrow of heart while the death-blow was administered.

But at the moment when all seemed lost, relief came, and the Serbian army gathered itself together for a supreme effort. The news that supplies of ammunition were coming to the Serbs from her western allies must have leaked out. For a Bulgarian band descended from Strumitza one night

at the end of November and succeeded in blowing up the railway bridge at the point where the frontier ran dangerously near the line. Fortunately they were too late. The munitions had already passed on their way northwards, and the Serbian High Command were preparing for their great stroke.

The aged king now appeared among his soldiers on the heights of Rudnik. The faint-hearted he invited to return to their homes. They should not be made to pay for their desertion should the coming fight be won. But the house of Karageorgevitch would conquer or die.

It was on December 3 that the Serbs suddenly turned upon their enemy. General Mishitch, who had taken command of the First Army, now reported that he was confident of being able to break the opposing line. Moving forward even before he had received permission from Head-quarters, he flung his force upon the astonished Austro-Hungarians. The Serbian gunners, masters of their science, poured such a pitiless rain of shells upon them that they believed the Serbs to have been in some wonderful way vastly reinforced. From every direction the Serbian infantry closed in on them, creeping over the hills and appearing suddenly from unlikely quarters. In the first three days of the fighting the Serbs took over 5,000 prisoners and the hill-sides were strewn with the dead and wounded. The Austro-Hungarians fell back, hoping to re-form their shattered units. But they were given no respite. While they were continually attacked in front, a division under Colonel Angelkovitch moved rapidly through the mountains and planted itself between them and Valyevo. By this manœuvre the Fifteenth Corps and part of the Sixteenth were cut off from their line of communication and had to make the best of their way by tracks and footpaths towards the Drina. Their retreat became a rout. Then the Serbs

moved forward all along the line. Valyevo was recaptured after two hours' resistance, and the remaining Austro-Hungarian armies were driven northwards. As the disorder and confusion increased among the retreating enemy the fighting became a mere pursuit. In their haste to overtake the flying Austro-Hungarians the Serbs could not deal with the numerous prisoners who had surrendered. Convoys of several hundred were sent off into the interior with single guides to lead them. Finally no men could be spared, and the astonishing spectacle might be seen of long columns of prisoners marching across Serbia with no accompanying guard whatever. 'Follow the telegraph-wires and you'll come to Lazarevatz,' they were told.[1] To many towns of the interior the first news of victory was brought by these strange companies of unguarded prisoners.

On December 15, thirteen days after they had left it, the Serbs were back in Belgrade. The soil of the mother country was again free from the invader. Seldom, since the time when Sennacherib's host melted away from the walls of Jerusalem, has there been so sudden and dramatic a change of fortune. In a fortnight the Serbs had been roused from despair by the iron will and swift decision of their leaders, and had hurled their opponents in headlong flight across the frontiers. Bravely had Serbia done her share of the common task of the Allies. Successive Austro-Hungarian armies had been shattered, and forces equal to the whole of Serbia's strength had been put out of action. When the Serbs came to count their spoils they found that they had captured close on 70,000 prisoners, 192 guns, 90,000 rifles, 491 cartloads of ammunition and large supplies of other material of war.[2] Truly the modern Serbian heroes had surpassed all the deeds

[1] Fraccaroli, p. 58.

[2] Savić, p. 130.

of their forefathers. No enemy would again lightly attack the peasant-army that had rolled the pride of the Habsburg empire in the dust.

Great were the rejoicings in Nish and Belgrade that Christmastide—the last that many thousands of Serbs were to spend in their own country. Well might they imagine that for the present their troubles were over and that their sorely tried nation was now to have a breathing-space of peace and quietness. Permanent peace they would not buy at the cost of abandoning France, Britain, and Russia; although Austria-Hungary now offered excellent terms, the Serbs felt themselves morally bound to the Allies, who had entered the war directly or indirectly on their account, despite the fact that the Powers of the Entente had not made (nor have yet made) any treaty with the Serbian government. Peace did indeed reign in Serbia for many months; but peace took her toll of suffering and death no less than war. By an irony of fate the very completeness of Serbia's victory brought upon her new and terrible misfortunes. Amongst the quantity of prisoners for whom at first adequate provision could not be made, were large numbers who had succumbed to disease amid the hardships of war. Scattered among the towns and villages of Serbia they soon began to spread the dreaded scourges of typhus and cholera. The trouble began in the west, in the districts of Uzhitze and Valyevo, where the line of the enemy's flight had remained littered with the dead bodies of men and animals. But the contagion spread rapidly across the country, and there were few means of arresting its progress. Since the outbreak of war Serbia had suffered from a shortage of doctors. Her medical students were accustomed to study at Vienna and other foreign universities, and in the summer 120 doctors and medical

students, though non-combatants and therefore protected by international law, had been interned in Austria-Hungary. Besides, strictness over hygiene is the result of a very developed material civilization and the Serbian peasantry had no idea of the measures necessary to combat the danger in their midst. In her agony Serbia sent an appeal to her allies, and soon medical units—British, French, Russian, American—were hurried out and set themselves with vigour to conquer the diseases. For four months they laboured, many of the doctors, nurses, and orderlies falling victims to their devotion, and then they triumphed. By July 1915 the typhus and the cholera were overcome, and Serbia was herself again, but with the loss of thousands of lives which she could ill spare.

Many Serbs thought that now at last had come a time of rest and relaxation. They would not be attacked, and they would need time for much reorganization before they could think themselves of assuming the offensive. Young Serbian officers married in that summer of 1915 in the firm conviction that a long period of peace lay before them. But there were others who more correctly appreciated the European situation. While Serbia was fighting her way back to physical health, the whole aspect of the eastern front had changed. Instead of advancing to the siege of Cracow and the invasion of Silesia, the Russians were in full retreat, driven along by Mackensen's overwhelming artillery. Farther and farther the German armies advanced. When they had finally driven back the Russians into their own country, disheartened and disorganized, what would be the fate of Serbia, unsupported by her natural protector ?

9

The Downfall

Bolye ye umreti u lepoti, nego zhiveti pod sramotom.
'It is better to die in beauty than to live under disgrace.'
M. Pashitch.

Consider the position of the Central Empires in the late summer of 1915. Mackensen's offensive had been marvellously successful and had restored the confidence of the German nation in their own invincibility and ultimate triumph. But the Russian army had not been destroyed. The great encircling ring of trenches still shut in Germany and Austria-Hungary on both sides. In the West the continuous line ran from the North Sea to the Adriatic, broken only by the strictly neutral territory of Switzerland. In the East the Russian-Serbian-Montenegrin line similarly stretched from the Baltic to the Adriatic, interrupted only by Roumania, who from the beginning of the war had shown herself ready to defend her frontiers against aggression and was drifting steadily towards alliance with the Entente. Outside this circle and cut off from direct communication with her allies was Turkey, whose all-important fortress of the Dardanelles was being assailed by Britain and France. Without supplies of ammunition from Central Europe the Turks might collapse. Constantinople and the passage to the Black Sea would soon lie open. Then the Western Powers would be able to pour into Russia all those munitions of war, the lack of which had made the German triumph in Poland possible. Without

Turkey and with their enemies linked together by easy lines of communication the Central Empires could have been made to feel the strangling grip of the Grand Alliance. It was therefore of vital importance to them to break their way through to the support of the Turks.

The obvious route, the shortest and the most practicable, between Constantinople and Hungary is that of the railway-line along which used to run the Orient Express, through Belgrade, Nish, Sofia, and Adrianople. Two small states, Serbia and Bulgaria, held the passage across the Balkan peninsula. Both would have to be dealt with in such a way as to secure German control of the whole route to the East. With Serbia no terms were possible. She would have to be conquered. But Bulgaria could be won with territory and gold. Tsar Ferdinand was ardently Austro-Hungarian in sympathy. His ministers shared his point of view. The whole nation desired revenge upon Serbia and the acquisition of Macedonia. If Bulgaria fell upon Serbia from behind, that devoted little country could not fail to be crushed, provided the suspicions of the Allies were not aroused too soon. Bulgaria had to see that the game was not given away beforehand.

Towards the close of the summer, therefore, large forces were concentrated in southern Hungary, while Bulgaria continued to profess her intention of remaining strictly neutral. The Serbs knew through the reports of their French aviators that an army was being collected for a fourth invasion of their country. They could not tell the numbers with which they would have to deal, but they were confident that after so many reverses the enemy would not advance except in overwhelming force. Of another point also they were sure from the beginning, and that was that Bulgaria would strike

as soon as a powerful offensive should divert Serbia's attention to the northern frontier.

Seeing that they were faced with a more desperate situation even than in 1914, the Serbian government appealed to its allies for 250,000 troops. Serbia could still put into the field another 250,000 ; and with half a million men it would be possible to inflict on the German invasion the same fate as its predecessors had undergone. To this appeal the Allies returned the remarkable reply that they would arrange with the Bulgars to supply the number of men required. So the Allies entered into negotiations with M. Radoslavoff's ministry, no doubt to the latter's vast amusement. The Bulgars represented themselves as willing to join the Entente if their national aspirations were satisfied. The Allies accordingly offered to obtain for them that part of the Dobrudja which Roumania had acquired in 1913, a large portion of Serbian Macedonia, and from Greece Kavalla and the territory immediately behind it. The Allies, in fact, with open-handed generosity bartered away other people's property. The effect was disastrous. Greek opinion was infuriated at the calm manner in which the Allies proposed to hand over to Greece's secular enemy territory which she had won upon the battle-field. Serbia and Roumania were no less astonished and outraged at the disregard of their interests. And all the while every one in the Balkans was certain that Bulgaria would never march with the Allies.

Despite his preparations for war, M. Radoslavoff continued to protest that his country would remain neutral. As late as September 25, two days after the Bulgarian mobilization had begun, he informed the Greek minister at Sofia that Bulgaria did not intend to attack either Greece or Serbia. Even at the last moment before plunging into

war he assured the British and Russian ministers that the Bulgarian mobilization was not directed against Serbia, but was a precautionary measure in case Germany should press on across Serbia and violate Bulgarian territory.

The Balkan statesmen knew better. As early as September 1 the Greek minister at Vienna warned his government that Bulgaria would attack Serbia on October 15. Mr. Gordon Smith, the Scottish journalist, had an interview with M. Venizelos in September, on his way through Athens to Salonika. 'We are completely at a loss', said the Greek premier, 'to understand the aberration of the Allies. They drag on negotiations with our worst enemies, when a child could see that they are being fooled by the wily Bulgarian premier, who is acting under orders from Berlin and Vienna. He is dragging out the pretended negotiations in order to give the Central Powers time to concentrate their armies against Serbia.'[1]

Looking back after the event, we find it hard to understand how any one could have believed in the possibility of drawing Bulgaria into the Entente. It was a common opinion in England that she would never fight against Russia, though she was governed at the time by a Russophobe ministry. Further, during 1915 Bulgaria had come to an agreement with Turkey by which she acquired the railway-line leading down the Maritza valley to Dedeagatch, and had received a loan of 250,000,000 francs from Vienna and Berlin. These little items would not have been furnished by our enemies in return for nothing. And there was another fact that gave food for thought. Bulgaria had suffered very extensive losses in guns and ammunition during the second Balkan war. Since then she had drawn no

[1] Gordon Smith, p. 15.

supplies from France or Great Britain. Yet now she was completely equipped for war. Her wants had clearly been supplied by the Central Empires. In April, too, an incident occurred which gave an indication of Bulgarian feeling and formed a presage of future events; a Bulgarian band descended once more on the Vardar valley and succeeded in cutting the railway, Serbia's only line of communication with the outer world.

But apart from all these occurrences, if Bulgaria abandoned her neutrality, her aspirations would naturally draw her to the Central Empires rather than to ourselves. English and French writers were never tired at the time of pointing out that only by the victory of the Entente could a Balkan settlement on the basis of nationality be made possible. If the Allies prevailed, Roumania, Serbia, and Bulgaria could be extended to include all their 'unredeemed' co-nationals, while Greece could be made to include a large portion of the Hellenic population in Asia Minor. These writers were absolutely correct thus far. What we did not realize was that a settlement on the basis of nationality does not suit Bulgaria. She aspires to the hegemony of the Balkan peninsula. Her statesmen and soldiers glory in the title of 'the Prussians of the Balkans', and hope to deal with Serbia and Greece as Prussia dealt with Hanover and Bavaria in 1866. Greece might be a subordinate state, but Serbia must disappear, be absorbed, crushed. Not a federation of free and equal states, such as M. Venizelos had hoped to see, but a Bulgarian empire was Sofia's programme. As to Constantinople, it was clear that no Balkan state was yet strong enough to grasp that prize. But Bulgaria's policy was determined with regard to that too. Russia must, if possible, be prevented from

extending across the sea and planting herself upon the Golden Horn and the Dardanelles. As long as the Turk continued his feeble rule at Constantinople, Bulgaria could hope one day to enter the imperial city, which would then become again the capital of a Balkan empire. But a Great Power settled on the Bosphorus would close the eastward path of Bulgarian expansion.

The Central Empires offered the partition of Serbia and the continued Turkish possession of Constantinople. Although this meant also the German control of both Turkey and Bulgaria, Tsar Ferdinand and his ministers were hardly likely to reject such a prospect in favour of the Powers who wished to support Serbia and to bring Russia to the Aegean Sea. Bulgaria's mind was made up. She threw in her lot with Germany, though she lulled the Allies' suspicions by demands and promises till the very moment of her participation in the war.

It was on September 23 that the Bulgarian government ordered a general mobilization. The Serbs were under no illusions as to what that meant. The German-Austrian bombardment of the Serbian front along the Save and the Danube had begun four days earlier. Everything was ready for the Bulgars.

Serbia was now in a death-trap. On her northern frontier was a far more formidable army than any that had yet been sent against her. Germany was determined that there should be no mistake this time. More than two-thirds of the troops were German, and at their head was Germany's master-strategist, Mackensen, with his able lieutenant, Gallwitz. To the east of Belgrade Gallwitz commanded nine German divisions and an Austro-Hungarian brigade. Opposite Belgrade and along the Save were the 22nd

German army corps and the 16th and 19th Austro-Hungarian corps, while on the Drina were three more Austro-Hungarian brigades. In all there were about 164 battalions. But it was not on infantry, however numerous, that the Germans depended for victory. Each of their divisions was supported by two regiments of artillery, and they had collected an overwhelming number of very heavy guns.

Against this display of force the Serbs were, of course, unable to oppose their whole army. Except along the common frontier with Greece, they had to guard against enemies from every side on a front of more than 1,000 kilometres. Five of their best divisions, with the cavalry division and some small detachments, guarded the Bulgarian frontier, under the command of Voivoda Stepanovitch (Second Army) and General Goikovitch. Opposed to the Austro-Germans were the First Army (Voivoda Mishitch) along the Save, the Third Army (General Yurishitch) along the Danube, and in the centre round Belgrade a force of six regiments, three being of the third ban, under General Zhivkovitch. Altogether on the northern front the Serbs could muster about 116 battalions, of which number forty were drawn from the third ban. The enemy were therefore stronger in infantry in the proportion of three to two, while their preponderance in artillery was far greater. On the eastern front the enemy's numerical superiority was even more pronounced (being more than two to one), though the Serbian Second Army contained three divisions of the first ban, as good troops as any in Europe. Roughly we may say that 250,000 Serbs (a liberal estimate and one that includes many hundreds of men not yet fully recovered from typhus) had to make headway against 300,000 Austro-Germans and more than that number of Bulgars.

One course only had seemed to promise rapid and possibly decisive success. The Serbs at first determined to take advantage of their own preparedness to attack the Bulgars before these had completed their mobilization. Such an offensive could not have led to the complete defeat of Bulgaria, but the Serbian General Staff judged that they could thereby safeguard the Salonika railway and, by occupying several important centres, throw Bulgaria's plans into considerable confusion and cripple her army. In that case Serbia could have afforded to wait patiently for the support which the Allies had promised to send by way of Salonika and Skoplye. But the Allies had been to the last duped by Radoslavoff. Convinced that the Bulgars would never break with the Entente, they had assured the Serbs that the Bulgarian mobilization was not directed against them, and had vetoed any attack by Serbia. In obedience to their wishes the Serbs therefore had withdrawn their troops to a short distance from the Bulgarian frontier and now awaited the avalanche that was to descend upon them.

It was, however, not yet certain how much help Serbia was to receive. An Anglo-French force was coming to Salonika. But what did Greece propose to do ? By the treaty of 1913 Serbia and Greece were bound to come to each other's assistance if either were attacked by Bulgaria. In such a combined campaign Serbia was to provide at least 150,000 men to co-operate with the Greeks in Macedonia. But the Serbs had no troops to spare. Accordingly M. Venizelos had asked the Allies whether they could dispatch the necessary 150,000 in the event of a Bulgarian attack on Serbia. The Allies had replied that they would do so, and, becoming at last suspicious of Bulgaria's intentions, they proceeded at once to land their first contingent

at Salonika. Hearing of this on October 2, the Greek government felt bound to protest against this violation of its neutral territory, since Bulgaria had not yet entered the war. But, despite the formal protest, there is no doubt that M. Venizelos and the majority of his countrymen, knowing the imminence of Bulgaria's intervention, were delighted at the arrival of the Anglo-French troops. On the next day the Russian government sent an ultimatum to Bulgaria which was disregarded. Bulgaria was now clearly showing her intention to fight. But what of the threat of Greek intervention? During the Austro-Hungarian offensives of 1914 this menace had been sufficient to restrain Bulgaria from stabbing Serbia in the back. Now it had lost its terrors. The truth is tolerably clear that there had already been treachery at Athens and that Bulgaria had been assured that Greece would not make common cause with the Allies. On October 4 M. Venizelos delivered a memorable speech, declaring that Greece would loyally stand by her treaty obligations and make common cause with Serbia. He was supported on a division by a substantial majority of the Chamber of Deputies. Next day King Constantine sent for his Prime Minister and declared that he could not follow the policy indicated. M. Venizelos resigned his office, and with his retirement disappeared all hope of Greek help for Serbia. A neutralist cabinet without a parliamentary majority assumed the government and informed M. Pashitch that Greece did not hold herself bound to abandon her neutrality. Of the many excuses brought forward in support of this betrayal of an ally two only seemed to merit attention. One was that the treaty spoke only of an attack by Bulgaria and not of a united assault on Serbia by Bulgaria and other Powers. This

was the first hint of such a curious interpretation of the treaty, and had not been previously put forward by any Greek government. The other argument was that Serbia could not provide 150,000 men for the common resistance to Bulgaria. This was no more than a debating point. Voivoda Stepanovitch had over 100,000 men opposed to the Bulgars in Serbia, while the Allies had already at the beginning of October 22,000 at Salonika and more were to follow shortly.

Anyhow, with justification or without, the new Greek government had no intention of coming to the rescue. Serbia had been betrayed, not by Greece, but by a Greek faction. The only help to be expected was from the Anglo-French troops gathering at Salonika. Unable to move their expeditionary force rapidly up from the coast, the Allies bade the Serbs retire slowly before the enemy, avoiding any general engagement, until a junction should be effected with the Anglo-French contingent. This advice, absolutely necessary under the circumstances, made cruel demands on the steadfastness of an army of peasants, with whom patriotism primarily takes the form of a passionate adoration for their home, their village, their district. They would be obliged to see their country overrun by troops, most of whom they had soundly defeated before and were now confident of defeating again. The Serbs have encountered the almost incredible criticism that in the campaign which followed they did not 'put up a fight'.[1] Rather might they be criticized in the opposite sense, for having put up too much of a fight. Had they not offered a desperate resistance which held back their enemies for the first three weeks, it seems probable that they could have made certain

[1] A. and C. Askew, p. 214. The authors encountered a British officer who made the statement quoted above.

of joining hands with the Allies. It would have meant a deliberate sacrifice of nearly all the northern half of Serbia, the real Serbia, and a retirement into the new territories. But it would have been better to sacrifice the land and preserve the army. Had such a strategic retreat been successful, there would never have been the horrors of Albania, nor would the civil population of Serbia have found itself caught in a trap from which there was no escape. Even had the enemy not been brought to a halt to the north and east of Skoplye, still the route to Salonika would have been open.

. . . . . .

The Austro-Germans began with an intense artillery preparation. Fifty thousand shells are said to have fallen upon the stricken city of Belgrade in two days. Then on October 6 the enemy began the passage of the rivers. Their main objectives were the Morava valley and the capital. Their guns pounded and wrecked the Serbian positions. Their infantry came on in dense masses. The British, French, and Russian heavy artillery defending Belgrade were silenced almost at once. Yet the Serbs clung to the river banks and destroyed the successive waves of infantry which succeeded in effecting a foothold on Serbian territory. So the fight raged for a week. Then the enemy's numbers and guns could no longer be denied. Smederevo fell on the 11th and was followed by the loss of Belgrade on the 15th. Mackensen had thus accomplished the first two steps of his plan of campaign. He had secured the rail-head of the coveted line to Constantinople and established his hold on the lower Morava. On October 17 Voivoda Mishitch's army, which had succeeded in repelling all attacks from the Austro-Hungarians on the Save, was obliged by these disasters

to fall back to the south-east in order to maintain its communications with the Serbian centre.

All this time the Serbs were confidently awaiting the arrival of the allied troops. Britain and France were Great Powers with vast resources, and Sir Edward Grey had promised that Serbia should not be left to fight alone. Besides, apart from the loyalty of their allies, in which they had complete confidence, the Serbs knew the supreme importance of their country in the world-war. Once let the Austro-Germans batter their way through Serbia and the 'Berlin–Baghdad' plan would be accomplished. In her own interests Britain must prevent the collapse of Serbia. Also she had sworn to support her. So the streets of Nish were gaily decorated with the flags of the Entente to welcome the Anglo-French soldiers. Every day rumours went round the town that the Allies were to arrive next day from Salonika. Then, as their army was slowly pressed back by sheer weight of men and artillery, and no sign of help came from the south, the bitter truth was borne in on the Serbs. Despite their goodwill, despite the best of intentions, the Allies had failed to grasp the situation. Once more they were too late. Quietly the decorations were removed from the houses in Nish. There was very little display of rancour against the Great Powers that were abandoning their little comrade to a hopeless struggle. With the doggedness of despair the Serbs settled down to sell their lives and their country as dearly as they could.

On October 12 the Bulgars at last threw off the mask. Without any declaration of war they attacked the Serbian advanced posts, and on the night of the 13th moved forward along the whole eastern front. Their line stretching from the Danube to the neighbourhood of Radovishte contained

177 battalions. The pressure on the northern front had forced the Serbs to transfer their cavalry division and that of Shumadia (first ban) from the Second Army to the lower Morava. To oppose the Bulgars, therefore, the Serbs had only 78 battalions. Nevertheless, the enemy encountered a desperate, and at most points completely successful, resistance. Despite their small numbers the Serbs felt that they had beaten the Bulgars but two years before and could do so again. For ten days all the attacks in the Timok and Nishava districts were repulsed. Not till October 25 did the enemy succeed in reaching Kniayevatz, some twenty kilometres from the frontier. On the same day to the north of Pirot the Bulgars sustained a severe and costly defeat. In spite of their success, however, the Serbian eastern army began to find themselves in a position of the utmost danger. The Austro-German advance on Kraguyevatz was already threatening Nish and the junction of the two Moravas. The Serbs could not maintain themselves against the heavy guns. They bitterly complained that they never saw the Germans with whom they were longing to get to grips. Mackensen, indeed, now used his infantry, which was of poor quality, as little as possible, while he blasted his way across Serbia with the devastating fire of his artillery. The Second Army and the troops along the Timok accordingly were obliged to retire, to avoid being taken in the rear. The government left Nish for Kralyevo and by the beginning of November the First, Second, and Third Armies, and the intermediate detachments, had all concentrated in the angle between the two Moravas. Kralyevo and Krushevatz were further crowded with the civil population of the north and east, thousands of whom fled with the army, urging their slow-moving ox-wagons

along the congested and impossible roads. Hope was not yet dead. Many of the Serbs still believed that there were no limits to what their army could do amongst their own mountains. Occasionally accidental causes maintained even a desperate gaiety. Mr. Gordon Smith tells how he arrived at Krushevatz to find the town apparently *en fête* and the inhabitants singing and dancing, despite the distant booming of the German cannon. At a loss at first to understand this unexpected revelry, he soon discovered its origin. The government had been destroying their stores or distributing them to the public. Amongst the goods in Krushevatz station had been found 20,000 bottles of champagne. The population had determined not to abandon this treasure-trove, and, as it could only conveniently be carried internally, they had proceeded at once to absorb it.[1]

But the news from the south was of the worst possible. The Serbs had been obliged to fall back on the southern Morava to the north of Vranya. The Vardar valley was only held by the new Macedonian divisions, which were far below strength and poorly supplied with guns of all calibres. Here the Bulgars proceeded at once to cut the railway-line near Strumitza, thus placing themselves between the Serbs and any possible relief from Salonika. Serbia was now encircled. Her only railway communication with the outer world was gone, except for the few miles from Monastir to the Greek frontier. And the roads to Monastir might be closed any day. By October 22 the Bulgars had advanced to Skoplye, where they captured Lady Paget and her English hospital, and pressed on towards Katchanik.

Although the Anglo-French force had now moved up the Vardar as far as Gradsko, it was clear that it could do

[1] Gordon Smith, p. 92.

nothing to enable the main body of the Serbian army to hold its ground on the Morava. The Serbs, therefore, had no choice but to fall back on the plain of Kossovo and from there to force their way through the Bulgars and join their allies. Thus in the second week of November the Serbs set out on their way of sorrows. People and army, mixed together in continuous streams of human misery, flowed southwards along the narrow roads through the mountains. The rain fell pitilessly upon the fugitives. The wheels of the ox-wagons churned the mud into deep morasses. Only three routes were possible. The First Army followed the course of the Ibar past Rashka to Mitrovitza. The Third Army and the garrison of Belgrade had to make use of the one track that led over the hills from Kurshumlia to Prepolatz and Prishtina. The Second Army's line of retirement from Lescovatz towards the same point was threatened by the Bulgar advance from the south. At one moment indeed, on November 10, their retreat was cut off, and they only re-established their communications after a fierce fight. The transport of the Second and Third Armies and of the garrison of Belgrade managed to pass through Kurshumlia just in time. The Bulgars were only some ten miles to the east; the Austro-Hungarians were already at Rashka on the west; close behind were the Germans, being kept back by the Third Army. And at Kurshumlia there could be no resting for the troops. Their enemies were closing in relentlessly on three sides. Another race lay before them, to reach Prishtina before they were surrounded.

With the army went the 'recruits', young men who would soon have been old enough to be taken for military service. For them there was no provision; no uniforms, no arms,

no food, no transport. The sufferings of those unfortunate lads is one of the most heartrending features of the national martyrdom. Then in many places the food-supply began to give out. Rations could not be supplied to all the troops. The soldiers presumed that the civilians would have brought supplies with them. The civilians hoped that at any rate they would be able to beg some food from the army. Both received the same answer, 'Nema' (There is none). Very little could be procured in the villages. Seeing their hated masters in distress, the Albanians of Kossovo and the Sandjak demanded exorbitant prices. They began to refuse paper money, and raised the price of a loaf of bread, which normally cost 25 paras, to 5 dinars (francs). And this was only the beginning of the retreat. Later on at Petch the loaf rose to 10 dinars, and Mr. Askew speaks of an officer paying 28 dinars for a quarter of a loaf.[1] The cold was becoming bitter. The continuous rain began to turn to snow. The troops suffered the misery of vermin. Overhead were the enemy's aeroplanes. Stragglers met with little mercy at the hands of Turks and Albanians. Yet in spite of everything the retirement to Kossovo was carried out swiftly and skilfully, and the enemy succeeded in making no captures either of artillery or supplies.

By November 15 the whole Serbian army was collected in and round the plain of Kossovo, the chief concentration being at Prishtina, while the First Army held off the Austro-Hungarians to the north of Mitrovitza. The Serbs were now at their last gasp. Surrender they would not, though all that was left to them of their country was the barren little corner in which they were encamped. Beyond lay only the forbidding mountain walls of Albania and Monte-

[1] Askew, p. 293.

negro. They gathered themselves for one supreme effort. Between Prishtina and Skoplye lie the ranges of Shar Planina and Kara Dagh, separated by the pass of Katchanik. On November 17 five divisions of infantry and two mixed detachments advanced in the forlorn hope of piercing the Bulgarian line across the pass and opening a way of escape to the south. Gallantly the weary and starving troops hurled themselves on the enemy. At first they were successful and pushed steadily forward. An intercepted dispatch showed that the Bulgars considered the position critical. But speed was essential to the Serbs. The Austro-German advance menaced them from behind. On November 20 the Germans crossed the old Serbo-Turkish frontier at Prepolatz and pushed on to within twelve kilometres of Prishtina. It was clear that the exhausted men at Katchanik would not be able to force the passage into the Vardar valley in time. Also the news came through from the south that the Allies, whose advance had been used to buoy up the spirits of the troops, were falling back towards Salonika. On November 21, the troops received the order to fall back and rejoin the rest of the army, which was now withdrawn to the left flank of the Sitnitza.

It was the end. The Serbs could do no more. They had been attacked by three Powers, betrayed by the Greek government, unsupported by their western allies. They had done all, and more than all, that could be required of any army. They now stood on the farthest limit of their country, on that sacred plain of sorrowful memories, where Tsar Lazar and the Serbian empire had perished. Again, the Serbian nation, restored to life at the cost of so much blood and sacrifice, was dying. Would it move us to surprise or criticism if Serbia had made her peace with the

victors, if she had lost all faith in those friends who had been powerless to help her, and had submitted to the yoke in patient expectation of one day liberating herself again? Remember that the soldiers had left wives and parents and children in the enemy's power. Even the civil population that had fled was now ordered to return home and face slavery rather than the almost certain death that awaited them beyond the frontier. Yet death was waiting for them also on their return across Old Serbia. The enemy had armed the Moslem Albanians and placed the policing of the countryside in their hands. The Arnauts did not need German encouragement in order to begin at once a pitiless hunt for Serbian victims.[1] It is no matter for wonder that many of the soldiers could not bear their position any longer and deserted. They did not understand this never-ending retreat. They demanded to be led against the enemy, whose vast numbers they did not realize, and to fight their way home. But when their chiefs only gave the order for further retreat they lost all heart and slipped away, making for the home which they had hardly seen for three long years.

Yet, if the resolution of individuals broke down, the steadfastness of the army as a whole was marvellous. The enemy never succeeded in taking prisoners a whole unit. And now the Serbian General Staff called on the army to leave the fatherland and face starvation and exile rather than make terms with the invaders. The cup of bitterness must be drunk to the dregs. There were no illusions as to what a retreat through Albania would mean. It would be a disaster. The precious guns, the motor vehicles, the greater

[1] Sturzenegger, p. 154; confirmed by Ganghofer in the *Neue Freie Presse* of January 5, 1916; *2e Livre bleu serbe*, No. 4, p. 21.

part of the wagons and even of the oxen and horses might be regarded as doomed to certain destruction. Of the men themselves many would probably succumb to cold and starvation before they could win through to Scutari, where the Allies promised to await them with food and supplies. With the army still went the 'recruits', and the prisoners. It was not the fault of the Serbs if these unfortunate Austro-Hungarians, Germans, and Bulgars had to undergo atrocious hardships and died by thousands on the road. The Serbian government had offered to exchange them, but, receiving no answer, had no choice but to order the prisoners to share in the retreat. 22,000 of them eventually succeeded in reaching the Adriatic.

The country over which the retreat had to be made consists of the Albanian Alps, the most savage and inhospitable region of Europe. Across the barren and precipitous mountains run no roads, only inferior mule-tracks, along which it is impossible to move wagons of any size. One good road existed in Montenegro leading from Andreavitza to Podgoritza, but to reach it the Serbs had to cross mountains of over 5,000 ft. in the intense cold of a Montenegrin December. The scanty inhabitants of the valleys were either Roman Catholic Albanians, whose only profession for centuries has been pillage and war, or the more remote Montenegrins, who did not see why alliance with Serbia should prevent them from charging monstrous prices for the miserable fare which they had to offer.

The plan of the General Staff was to hurry the army across the mountains to Scutari as quickly as possible, and then, with an impassable country between them and the enemy, to reorganize the exhausted troops with the help of the British and French Adriatic Missions. For this purpose as

many routes had to be used as possible. The bulk of the army retired by Petch and so to the road from Andreavitza. The troops of the new territories followed the shortest, but most difficult, passage, by Lium-Kula and Spash along the Drin. With them went the aged king, often on foot, despite his seventy-six years, sharing the misery and sufferings of his men. At the head of the column, too, was Voivoda Putnik. The old chief of the army was a martyr to asthma, and for two years had hardly quitted his room, which had been kept at a temperature of 86° Fahr. But the Voivoda could not be left to fall into the hands of the enemy. So, carried in a sedan-chair by four soldiers, he led the way through the snows of Albania. But he had fought his last campaign. His health could not recover from the retreat. When the army again took the field in 1916 he had to be left in Corfu, and on May 19, 1917, he passed away at Nice.

Lastly, the cavalry division and several other formations went south with orders to make their way along the Black Drin through Dibra to Monastir and there to join the troops which still held out in Macedonia, and the French detachment on the river Tserna. On December 2 the leading columns reached Dibra. But the next day the Bulgars entered Monastir and pressed on to drive the slender Serbian detachment from their last foothold in Macedonia. The line of march was therefore changed and the troops moved westward towards Elbasan in central Albania.

The first fortnight of December saw the First, Second, and Third Armies crossing south-eastern Montenegro, the First Army always covering the retreat and holding off the Albanian tribes. As the men reached the limits of human endurance, all order (but not self-discipline) began to break down. The army became a confused herd of famished and

CORFU

despairing fugitives. Blindly they staggered on through mud and snow. The path was littered with the bodies of the fallen and the carcasses of animals, on to which the soldiers flung themselves gnawing the raw flesh. The rags, which were all that was left of their uniforms, they bartered for bread and *rakia* in the miserable villages through which they passed. A Serbian officer has told me how he was forced to part with his trousers to buy half a kilo of flour, and had to tramp all the way from the Drin valley to Valona before he could reclothe himself. The men ate their boots and trudged on with naked and bleeding feet. Dysentery added its horrors to the march. Around could be heard the wolves waiting for those that fell by the wayside. Now and then a hostile aeroplane wheeled and circled overhead. But still they struggled on, for at Andreavitza there would be food and rest. At last they reached the town of promise. There was nothing. The organization at Scutari and the coast had not been able to deal with the difficulties of the situation, and there was no means of transport into the interior. On the troops had to go, on to Podgoritza and Scutari, a phantom army of dying men.

But neither at Scutari nor on the coast itself did the tale of misery end. The Adriatic was infested with Austro-Hungarian submarines. The wretched little port of San Giovanni di Medua, through which supplies were to have come and from which the civilians who had accompanied the army hoped to sail to some friendly shore, was blocked with the wreckage of shipping and wholly unable to sustain the rôle designed for it. Consequently the British Adriatic Mission, which met the Serbian army at Scutari, was unable properly to carry out the promises made to the General Staff. Whatever food came through was at once dealt out to the

hungry multitudes, but there was never enough. The Serbs continued to die of starvation at Scutari and Liesh.

The plan of reconstituting the army at Scutari behind the barrier of the mountains had to be abandoned. That plan had rested on the assumption that Italy, the nearest ally, with British and French assistance, would keep open the communication by sea from Brindisi to the Albanian coast. This Italy declared herself unable to do. Indeed, on December 9 an Austrian squadron sailed into Durazzo harbour and then into Medua and sank all the shipping in both ports, without being so much as challenged. And, apart from the dangers of the sea, a further stay in Scutari was made impossible by the advance of the enemy. Mount Lovchen, the supposedly impregnable fortress of the Montenegrins above Cattaro, fell to the Austro-Hungarians. The road to Tsetinye and Podgoritza lay open and defenceless. At the same time the Bulgarians were pressing in from the east and threatening Elbasan. The Serbian army clearly could not stay where it was. But where could it find the haven of refuge for which it longed ? Corsica and Tunis were suggested. The civilians were shipped off for Corsica, and a first detachment of some 10,000 troops was dispatched to Bizerta. But the sea journey in both cases was considered too long, and Africa would have been too torrid a climate for the Serbs accustomed to their mountains and exhausted by their privations. It was finally decided to transport the army from Valona to Corfu. Corfu indeed was Greek territory. But the Powers, on whose guarantee rested the independence of Greece as a constitutional state, considered themselves justified in forcing that kingdom to extend some hospitality to the ally whom she had been obliged by a faithless autocrat to abandon. On Corfu there would at

last be rest for the weary feet and peace for the tortured souls.

The roads southward from Scutari lay through a country that was at any rate nominally friendly. Here the influence of Essad Pasha, the one central authority left in Albania whose name commanded any widespread respect, was exercised on behalf of the Allies. But this did not prevent the inhabitants of the plain from following the example of the Albanians of the mountains in regard to the extortion of money. At the ferries they demanded gold, and those who could not pay might remain where they were and die. Those who went through the whole retreat say that the last stages through the marshes and mud of central Albania were the worst of all. Hope deferred, the continued starvation and the heart-breaking nature of the country broke down the resistance of the strongest. The whole retreat from the banks of the Morava to the harbour at Valona was one *crescendo* of sorrow and calamity. When at last Valona was reached thousands still died neglected before they could be taken off by the French and British ships. The Serbs were even required to march on to Santi Quaranta, but the General Staff refused to demand anything more of their men, who had patiently borne so many disappointments. From Valona the army, 150,000 strong, finally left Albania and crossed over to Corfu. Only the astonishing endurance of the Serbs made possible the miraculous escape of so large a number. Through the encircling lines of the enemy, through mud and snow, over mountains and marshes, despite famine and cold, these amazing patriots had forced their way out to the freedom that would enable them once more to return to the struggle.

In England we did not then know what had been happening. Our newspapers were unable to tell us what was being done

inside that ring of fire that encircled Serbia. We trembled for our little hero-ally, as day after day passed and still no word reached us. For two months the darkness of Golgotha enshrouded the Balkan mountains. When at last the curtain was raised, the western peoples saw uplifted before them against the red glow of carnage and slaughter the spectre of a cross on which was crucified a living nation. Serbia might have yielded to the powers of darkness. She might have sold her honour and sunk down among the subject races of 'Mitteleuropa'. But she had preferred loyalty to life. She was dying. But her spirit was alive. In the army at Corfu that immortal spirit was even then passing over the dry bones, clothing them with sinew and muscle, and filling them with the breath of resurrection.

CORFU. INFANTRY OF VARDAR DIVISION RE-EQUIPPED AND RECONSTITUTED

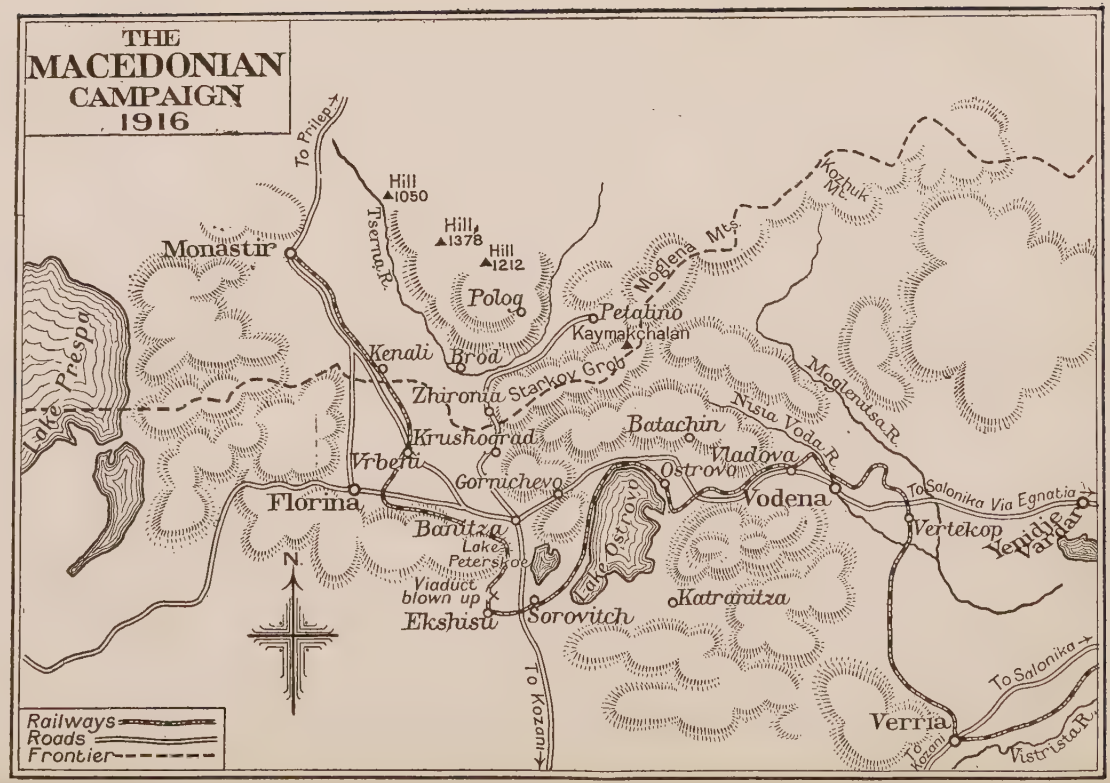
EMBARKING AT CORFU FOR SALONIKA

10

The Return of the Exiles

Al' za to opet pevam
'Zhivela Serbiya!'
'Nevertheless will I sing
"Long live Serbia!"'
(Song of Exile on Corfu.)

Although on their arrival at Corfu the Serbs were greeted with several weeks of continuous rain, the island presently lived up to its reputation as an earthly paradise. There the battered and broken remnants of the once invincible army nursed themselves back to life. At first there were difficulties with the food which the Allies provided. The Serbian soldier knew nothing of Australian frozen meat. He put it straight into the pot and was alarmed to find that it emerged in a state closely resembling rubber. 'Bully beef', too, became suspect on account of one or two tins that proved to be bad, owing perhaps to a stray nail having penetrated the tins. In any case the shrunken stomachs of starving men could not assimilate such unaccustomed fare. Bread was what they wanted, and after a few days they got it. Two field bakeries of thirty-two ovens each, as soon as they were constructed and the wood for fires had been collected, provided all the bread that was needed. But the work of reconstruction was necessarily slow. The army was destitute of nearly everything in the way of equipment. Hundreds still died every day, either because they were already too far gone for recovery or from exposure to the continuous rain. Daily the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To Prilep
Hill ▲1050
Hill ▲1378
Hill ▲1212
Tserna R.
Monastir
Kozhuk Mt.
Moglena Mts.
Pologˇ
Petalino
Kaymakchalan
Kenali
Brod
Lake Prespa
Zhironia
Starkov Grob
Moglenitsa R.
Nisia Voda R.
Batachin
Krushograd
Vrberi
Florina
Gornichevo
Vladova
Ostrova
Vodena
To Salonika Via Egnatia
Vertekop
Yenidje Vardar
Baritza
Lake Petersko
Viaduct blown up
Ekshisu
Lake Ostrovo
Katranitza
Sorovitch
To Kozani
To Salonika
Verria
To Kozani
Vistrista R.
N.
Railways
Roads
Frontier

boats put out with their tragic freight of dead, who had reached safety too late. But nothing could kill the great majority. Gradually their strength came back to them. They received their new British and French uniforms, their American boots, and their French rifles. The recruits were trained and the whole army reconstituted into new formations. It speaks highly for all ranks that by April there were already a number of units ready to leave the island for Salonika and to resume their endless task of war once again.

The mention of Salonika brings us back to the Greek question. The Allies had sent their troops to Salonika, immediately after M. Venizelos's inquiry about assistance in case of a Greco-Bulgarian conflict, in virtue of the position of Great Britain, France, and Russia, as the guarantors of the Greek constitution and in gentle vindication of the Serbo-Greek alliance. But King Constantine looked upon the expedition with extreme disfavour. General Sarrail's force seemed hardly sufficient to prevent the Germano-Bulgarian advance on Salonika, anyhow quite inadequate to check an attack southwards on Greece should that country decide to join the Allies. She would then suffer the fate of Belgium and Serbia. Besides, the king and his party at Athens were convinced not so much that Germany would win the war as that she had already done so. Greek neutrality was gradually changed into secret support of the enemy, and in March the Bulgars were allowed to cross the frontier and occupy useful strategic positions in the mountains. When the Greek government were asked to permit the transport of the Serbian army to Salonika by railway to avoid the enemy's submarines, they put forward many objections and ended by refusing. The Serbs passed round Greece by sea without mishap. But the most serious service which the Greeks rendered to our

enemies occurred at the end of May, when their commandant handed over the fort of Rupel to the Bulgars. This fort had been specially planned by the Greek government to defend the Struma valley against Bulgarian attacks, and occupied a position of extreme strength. Drama, Seres, and Kavalla, which M. Venizelos had obtained for his country after the victories of the second Balkan war, were thus exposed to the certainty of Bulgarian aggression as soon as hostilities began once more. The answer of the Allies to this act of treachery was to blockade the Greek ports and demand constitutional government based on real and free elections for the Greek Chamber ; while General Sarrail proclaimed martial law at Salonika and virtually assumed the government of that town. The Zaimis cabinet at Athens accepted the Allies' terms and preparations were made for holding the Greek elections in September.

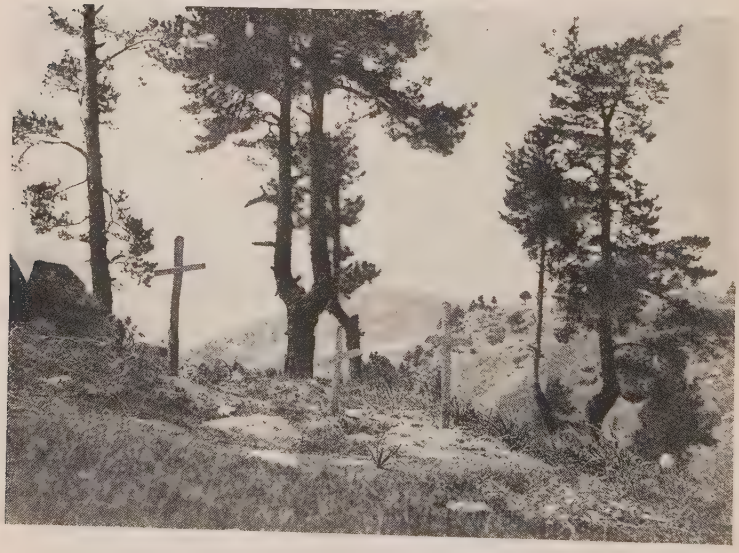
Such was the political situation when the Serbs arrived at Mikra Bay close to Salonika, with a view to becoming the left wing of the Allied armies in the coming offensive of the autumn. In front of them would be the Bulgars holding immensely strong positions on the crests of the mountain-ranges that form the Serbo-Greek frontier. Behind them they would have the doubtful factor of Greece, who was temporarily on her good behaviour owing to the Allied warships, but who might appear as an enemy, should the campaign in Macedonia go in favour of the Bulgarians.

The Serbian army numbered over 120,000 men, the whole fighting force remaining after the hardships of the retreat and the ravages of disease, except for a draft of some three hundred officers and N.C.O.s who went to Russia under the command of General Zhivkovitch to lead the Austro-Hungarian Serbs who had entered the Russian service.

IN THE MOGLENA MOUNTAINS

THE TSERNA VALLEY

A BILLET BEHIND THE LINE, MACEDONIA



LONELY SERBIAN GRAVES

Voivoda Putnik was no longer with them, for the old and trusted leader had been unable to recover from the trials of the winter and had to be left behind to pass the last months of his life far from the scene of war. His work as Chief of the General Staff was placed in the capable hands of General Boyovitch. The other heroes of previous campaigns, Mishitch, Stepanovitch, Yurishitch, were still with the army.

The equipment of the force was undertaken by France and Great Britain. The guns, rifles, machine-guns, &c., came from France, while the two western Powers provided equal shares of the rations, uniforms, ammunition, and animals. The same equal division was observed with regard to medical aid and transport. Each nation undertook to supply accommodation for 7,000 patients, Britain sending complete hospitals for the Serbian sick and wounded, France guaranteeing to the Serbs the use of the stipulated number of beds in her own hospitals. With regard to mechanical transport, each nation promised to carry 600 tons daily. The carrying of that amount has been the share of our M.T. companies in the Great War for the past year.

The country in which the Serbs were to operate presented the most formidable obstacles. Their share of the Allied line ran along the frontier from the east of Lake Prespa across the Monastir plain and along the Moglena mountains. On the summit of the precipitous wall from Starkov Grob to Kozhuk the Bulgars were firmly established, while across the Monastir plain lay the strong defensive works of Kenali, prepared under the supervision of von Mackensen himself. The means of communication with this front were most unsatisfactory. Running from Salonika to Monastir by the most direct route possible were the remains of what had once been a great Roman road, the Via Egnatia, which crosses the Vardar plain,

pierces the mountains at Vodena, climbs the Gornichevo pass to Banitza, and then runs level to Monastir. It is to-day a very practicable highway, at certain places even capable of satisfying the most critical motorist, and only very occasionally looking like the bed of a rocky stream. But in August 1916, when the campaign began, it presented a very different appearance. In the Vardar valley it was in a shocking state of disrepair with most of the bridges gone. In the hills beyond Vodena it could not aspire to any title more dignified than that of track. The railway had carried the traffic of the countryside before the war, and the so-called road had degenerated into a revolting mixture of mud and rocks, uneven enough to ruin any ordinary motor-vehicles in a short time. The only other road then in existence was the one which parts from the Via Egnatia at an inn east of Yenidje Vardar and runs through Verria and along the Vistritza valley to Kozani, where it joins the road that goes north to Sorovitch, and joins the Via Egnatia again close to Banitza.

The importance of this second route was that through Kozani communication could be opened up between Monastir and Thessaly, in other words between the Germano-Bulgarians and Old Greece, which would turn the left flank of the Salonika armies. Up the valley of the Moglenitza there was also a very rough track, which dispensed with bridges and plunged across the beds of any streams in its path. Among the mountains there were bridle-paths of the most forbidding kind which led over the crest to the Tserna valley. Finally there was the railway. It is a single-line affair, skirting along the edge of the Vardar plain to Vertekop and then climbing the mountains to Ostrovo by very steep gradients, through tunnels and over viaducts. At Vertekop, where the rise begins, the trains used often to stick and sometimes to move

backwards while the wheels still revolved furiously forwards. Even with three engines on the train frequent halts had to be called to get up steam. Owing to these difficulties and the congestion of the line railway transport was extremely slow. In 1916 the ninety miles from Salonika to Ostrovo were seldom accomplished in less than twenty-four hours, and, although things are far better now, it is not many months since it took some of our men three days to reach Banitza. After Ostrovo the railway parts from the road and runs beside the lake to Sorovitch, making a détour by Ekshisu and then turning north to Banitza and Florina.

The country itself contains extreme varieties of fertility and temperature. The Moglenitza valley is a green oasis of millet, maize, and cotton, surrounded by frowning masses of bare rock. At Vertekop the summer heat is overwhelming, while a few kilometres away on its ledge Vodena rejoices in gushing waterfalls and abundance of trees and vineyards. Similarly the fertile flats close to Ostrovo and Florina are in strong contrast with the barren uplands beside them.

The same variety applies to the inhabitants. In the Vardar valley the agriculturists seem to be chiefly Turkish and Greek, while beyond Vodena the Slavs preponderate. Greeks are always to be found in the towns, as are Turks. But the confusion of races, languages, and sympathies over the whole country-side is most intricate. Slavs, Greeks, Turks, Kutzo-Vlachs, Jews, Gipsies, Albanians, Bulgarian and Serbian partisans—they are all to be found, mixed in the towns or separated into their respective villages. In such a veritable *macédoine* there were certain to be many spies and agents of the enemy, men who had been secretly employed by Bulgaria before the Balkan wars or were now bought by the Germans. But the general feeling of the people seemed to be one of

indifference to the issues of the war, thankfulness that the presence of the Allies meant security and good roads, and irritation at the prevailing high prices. The chief impression which the peasants everywhere gave was that of great poverty and lack of enterprise. Macedonia was not able to contribute much to the sources of supply of the Serbs and their allies.

When the first two British General Hospitals (36th and 37th) arrived and moved up to Vertekop at the beginning of July, they were in a most exposed position. French troops lay to the north in the Moglenitza valley and small detachments were scattered along the railway-line as far as Florina. But there was little to stop a Bulgarian advance, had the enemy then wished to leave Serbian territory. At the end of July the Serbs began to move up westwards and resume once more the fight for their fatherland.

The First Army was placed in reserve under General Vasitch, who took up his head-quarters at Verria. The Second Army, under Voivoda Stepanovitch, occupied the Moglenitza valley and pushed up to the lower slopes of the mountains. They had probably the most difficult natural obstacles to face of any of the Serbian troops, and after their early success in gaining a foothold on the hills, they remained for many months unable to advance any farther. The Third Army, with General Yurishitch's head-quarters at Ostrovo, was spread out between that village and Florina. Their outposts were thrown forward at Vrbeni and Zhivonia, and their line ran across the mountains to the north-east of Gornichevo. It was too weak a force to try conclusions with the Bulgars, but the Allied strategy seems to have been based on the assumption that the enemy would not attack in force from Monastir. For the moment the Third Army's

THE FIRST DAY OF THE OFFENSIVE IN SEPTEMBER

From left to right General Vasitch, General Sarrail, General Boyovitch

AT H.Q. M.T. UNITS

The Bishop of Buckingham on left. The Author second from right

KAYMAKCHALAN

BULGARIAN TRENCHES ON KAYMAKCHALAN

only task was to hold the line and prepare for the coming offensive.

But the unexpected happened. The Germano-Bulgars decided to attack on the extreme wings of the Allied position, on the west from Monastir towards Kozani, on the east from Fort Rupel along the Struma to the sea. If the former movement were successful it would open the way to Old Greece and enable King Constantine to join forces with his brother-in-law. The latter would give the Bulgars the coveted port of Kavalla and the rich districts of Drama and Seres. On August 17 accordingly the enemy suddenly moved forward in strength from the Kenali line. General Yurishitch knew that he could not maintain his position on the Monastir plain, and the Third Army therefore fell back as rapidly as possible into the hills. The Bulgars occupied Banitza and Gornichevo and came down to Lake Ostrovo at the Sorovitch end. Thus the campaign opened with a rebuff. The Bulgars by a quick decisive movement, and owing to the Serbian numerical weakness, had achieved their object of opening the way to Kozani. Had they also been able to capture Ostrovo, which was now subjected to daily bombardment, they would presumably have pushed on down the valley and blown up several of the numerous viaducts, thus preventing a Serbian advance for several months. But reinforcements were hurried up. General Vasitch took over the Third Army, which was joined by the First Army, now commanded by Voivoda Mishitch. A French division, with the Serbian cavalry and some volunteers, came into the line on the eastern side of the lake, and preparations were made for a counter-attack.

It was at this time that our companies were moved up to carry the supplies and ammunition for the offensive. Two

companies had already since the end of July been working behind the Second Army and a detachment came up on August 18 to Ostrovo, where they had an unpleasantly exciting time and did very useful work in feeding the guns that checked the Bulgarian advance. In the second week of September a company also arrived at Ostrovo and worked through Katranitza behind the left wing. Another company, which had been at Verria behind the French troops that were moving round by Kozani, arrived at Ekshisu on September 17 and two days later moved round to Ostrovo to support the attack on Starkov Grob. It was during this movement that a number of their vans lost their way in the dark and, proceeding up the Monastir road, stopped just in time to avoid entering the Bulgarian lines. From Ostrovo they had a spell of most exacting work carrying ammunition past Gornichevo and on up the hills to the gun-positions. A company reached Ostrovo in two detachments on September 24 and October 8, by which time the whole of one company were helping in the service of the Third Army, and another with their heavy lorries were at Sorovitch, from which, as the Serbs advanced, they executed an ever-lengthening run into the Monastir plain.

The attack began with the triumphant rush of the Serbs up the pass to Gornichevo. They laboured under most difficult conditions. The artillery support was inadequate and only able to break up the wire entanglements in a few places. The advance had to be made across rough open ground, affording very little cover and too rocky to allow of digging in.

The Serbian ' trenches ', which could be seen all over that part of the country for a long while after, consisted of little semi-circular piles of stones, each affording cover for one or two men. Gornichevo village and ridge, however, were

carried on September 12, and while part of the Serbs began the attack on the Starkov Grob position, the rest followed the Bulgars down the road and captured Banitza.

With the Serbian advance over the hills the Bulgarian forces round Sorovitch found themselves in danger of being cut off from the Monastir plain, and they accordingly fell back with rapidity, blowing up the railway viaduct near Ekshisu,which station had therefore to be the Allied rail-head for the next two months. They were followed by the French and a brigade of Russians, who fought their way steadily towards Florina. After being taken and re-taken the town was finally occupied on September 18 and the Bulgars, after their one month's expedition into Greece, retired again to their Kenali line.

The Serbs meanwhile stormed Starkov Grob, which was carried a few days after the capture of Florina, and prepared themselves for the culminating struggle for Kaymakchalan, the mountain that towers up 8,000 feet high and forms the summit of the complex between the Tserna and the Nisia Voda. During the last fortnight of September the Third Army fought a battle of giants for the heights. It now seems marvellous that any force of men could have captured positions of such strength, unless supported by overwhelming artillery superiority, and even then it would have been long odds on the defence. As things were, it was a matter of the utmost difficulty to maintain the supply of ammunition and victualling, our Ford vans struggling night and day up the winding track that climbs the face of the mountain from Batachin, and handing over their loads to be taken on by carts or on mules and donkeys. But the Serbs were determined to climb the wall that shut them out from their own country. On the bare expanse of rock that surrounds the summit the toll of

casualties was very heavy. Day and night the Serbs and Bulgars fought in the labyrinth of trenches that crowned the mountain-top, which was taken and retaken by the desperate attacks of both sides. Many of the Serbian officers fell, the most conspicuous loss being the popular hero, 'Voivoda' Vuk Popovitch, the 'comitadji' and leader of the volunteer regiment, who had borne a charmed life through all the hottest corners of the previous campaigns. By the end of the month, terribly reduced in numbers but triumphant, the Serbs drove the Bulgars from Kaymakchalan and down the steep slopes to the north. The achievement was superb and showed the Serbs' complete mastery over the difficult art of mountain-warfare.

Thus in October the Allied line ran from Kaymakchalan down towards Zhivonia and then westwards in front of Vrbeni and Florina. Two of our companies were now working across the Monastir plain behind the First Army, and one company sent up a detachment to Banitza to be behind the left flank of the Third Army. It was decided to make a general advance of the French, Serbian, and Russian forces. While the Serbs continued to make progress towards the Tserna, the French delivered a frontal assault on the Kenali line that blocked the way to Monastir. General Sarrail himself came up to supervise the operations, and on October 14, after forty-eight hours of artillery preparation, the French infantry flung themselves against the enemy's position. They succeeded in entering a small portion of the front line, but the trenches were too well laid out. From the redoubts and forts the enemy were able to pour too murderous a fire upon the assailants. The French were obliged to fall back. Again the guns played on the enemy's trenches for several days, but were not powerful enough to destroy them. A second assault

THE FIRST PRAYER ON SERBIAN SOIL 1916

READING OUT ORDERS

THE CROWN PRINCE ALEXANDER AND GENERAL SARRAIL ENTERING MONASTIR

met with no greater success than the first. The Kenali line defied attack.

But what could not be done by direct method was unexpectedly and brilliantly achieved by the Serbs among the hills on the right wing. On October 17 the First Army made a sudden forward thrust. Down the steep descent to the Tserna they came, across the river and up the frowning hills on the northern side. Nothing could stop their rush. They captured Brod, and pushing on after the defeated Bulgars reached as far as Polog. This rapid advance brought them to a point north of the Kenali line, and it was clear that, if they could threaten that alinement on its left, the fight for Monastir would be won. So Voivoda Mishitch's army was reinforced with French infantry and guns, and on November 10 once more resumed the attack. Swinging round to westwards they fought a savage battle for four days, in which they captured over 3,000 prisoners and some thirty guns. That decided the fate of the Kenali line. The redoubtable position became untenable with the Serbs advancing on a point behind it. The Germano-Bulgarians were forced to retire to their second line, four miles from Monastir. But that too was turned by the continued advance of the Serbs up the left bank of the Tserna. Hill 1212 was captured and held despite a desperate attempt to retake it, and on November 18 the Serbs also established themselves on Hill 1378. The road to Prilep, along which alone the Bulgars could retire with safety, was now in danger. Monastir had to be sacrificed, and that at once. The enemy accordingly retired hastily to the north of the town, which thus returned to Serbia after just under a year of Bulgarian occupation. The French cavalry entered from the south at 9 o'clock on the morning of

Sunday, November 19, and a Serbian patrol, after swimming the flooded Tserna, rode in from the east. The German troops that were hurried up to save the situation arrived too late and found Monastir in the hands of the Allies.

It was unfortunate that the Allied Army was not able immediately to follow up its advantage and continue the pursuit of the enemy. The Bulgars had time to recover themselves and advanced once more to strong positions in the hills above Monastir from which they could shell the town. A few days later they began the bombardment, and they have continued to batter the unfortunate town on and off ever since. On November 22, when I went in to see it, Monastir was radiant and, except for the unkempt state of those buildings which had been hurriedly evacuated by the enemy, it showed no signs of having been through a campaign. To-day it is a desolate mass of ruins.

One further success, however, was achieved by the Serbs. With the help of the French Zouaves the Morava division captured Hill 1050. This was the last spurt of the autumn offensive. Although more and more troops, one Italian and two French divisions, as well as two Russian brigades, were added to the Allied force on this front, no large advance could be made. Both sides settled down to a prolonged pause which lasted through the winter. The time was used by the Serbs in building a number of excellent roads across the plain and up to Petalino, where previously there had only been bridle-paths, and in reconstituting their organization into two armies of three divisions apiece. Our companies were all up in the Monastir plain by this time (with the exception of one, which was working for the Second Army on the other side of the Moglena mountains),

and 'carried on' quietly, the only excitement being the snow and the visits of hostile air-craft, though another had the dangerous task of running supplies into the stricken town of Monastir and for their excellent work were corporately decorated with the *Croix de guerre*. On Christmas Day General Vasitch delighted the three companies working for his army by demanding a holiday for them and addressing to each of them short speeches in the most excellent English.

Another British unit also had appeared early in November —the 33rd Stationary Hospital, which pitched its camp at Sorovitch, hoping shortly to move to Monastir. Unfortunately the bombardment of the town made this impossible, and the hospital has had to be stationary ever since its arrival.

In the spring of 1917, then, the Allied position was roughly as follows: the French troops lay on either side of Monastir from Lake Prespa to the Tserna. On the left bank of the river the Italians continued the line till they joined hands with some Russians and the French Seventeenth Colonial Division. On the eastern side of the Tserna loop were the remainder of the Russians and the First Serbian Army perched on the rocks amid the snow and the pine-woods and linked up with the Second Army on the far side of the high mountains. At various places the trenches of either side approached each other nearly enough for witticisms to be exchanged and for occasional parties of Bulgars to desert to the Serbs.

Despite slight advances and interchange of position among the Allied troops, that is still the situation, though a new factor has appeared with the Greek participation in the war. It was the Bulgarian seizure in August 1916 of all Macedonia east of the Struma that precipitated matters. The disaster was made worse by the fact that the 4th Greek Army Corps at Kavalla was deliberately surrendered to

the enemy. This was more than Greek patriots could stand. A revolution was carried out at Salonika at the end of the month. The royalist troops were besieged in their barracks and eventually surrendered to General Sarrail, who had intervened to prevent further bloodshed. Three days later a local committee had established itself as the provisional government of Macedonian Greece. This foundation of a nationalist Greek state soon afterwards received immense additional strength by the adhesion of M. Venizelos. The ex-premier, unable any longer to bear the royal betrayal of Greek interests, had arrived in Salonika on October 9 and joined with Admiral Condouriotis and General Danglis in organizing the government of Macedonia. Greek patriots from all quarters, especially from the islands, joined the movement, and by the end of May the Venizelist volunteers co-operating with the Allies reached the number of 61,543 officers and men. The collapse of Roumania, however, by awakening the fears of the population of Old Greece, strengthened King Constantine and his General Staff in their anti-Ententist attitude. During the early months of 1917 Allied troops had to be sent into Thessaly to protect the rear of the Salonika armies. At one moment it seemed likely that the Allies would have to fight on two fronts. But at last in June the Entente decided to give M. Venizelos a free hand that he might prove the truth of his assurances that the bulk of Greek opinion was with him. On June 12 King Constantine abdicated in favour of his son, and on June 27 M. Venizelos returned to Athens as Prime Minister to restore constitutional government to his country. Greece is now once more ranged on the side of Serbia, her ally of the Balkan wars and her natural friend. The danger from the rear has disappeared, and the Allied

forces will in future have the double advantage of secure communications and the co-operation of the Greek army.

Thus far the only considerable successes of the campaign conducted from Salonika have been the work of the Serbs. Our own troops in eastern Macedonia have been confronted with terrible natural obstacles and have, so far, been unable to dislodge the Bulgar from his mountain fastnesses. The French have succeeded in advancing at several points. But it was the mountain fighting round the Tserna river which sealed the fate of Monastir. The Serbs have shown that, despite adversity and homelessness, their spirit remains unconquerable. They are but a fragment of the victorious army that triumphed over Turks, Bulgars, and Austrians a few years ago. They have now to depend on the prowess of their friends. Their enemies will never willingly restore to them their fatherland. But the Entente cannot cease from war till that heroic little band of exiles return as free men to their own country and that country is enlarged into the Yugoslavia of their dreams.

II

To-day: The Serbian People and their Aspirations

Kralyevinu Srpsku brani
Petvekovne borbe plod.
'Guard the Serbian kingdom,
Fruit of five centuries of strife.'
(National Anthem.)

The present is an unsatisfactory point at which to conclude our survey of the career of the Serbian nation. Unfortunately we cannot write future history. We long with all our hearts to see the drama brought to its fit and happy ending. Not that the ending can be 'happy' for the many Serbs who have lost wife or husband, parents or children in these red years of war. But the villain of the piece can be chastised. He can be driven from the home over which he has for two years cast the shadow of his hateful presence. The 'evil neighbour' of Bulgaria can be sent back to his own house, there to meditate on the error of his ways and to amend them. That is what we hope for. So let us close by taking stock of the present fate of our Serbian friends and looking into their future as we trust it will shape itself after the final victory of the Entente.

The Serbian nation to-day is broken up and scattered over the face of Europe. Roughly we may divide it into four groups: those who are still on their native soil under the rule either of Austria-Hungary or Bulgaria; those who have been deported into slavery in these two countries or in Asia

Minor (if deportation to Asia Minor be not a euphemism for extermination) ; those who are free, but exiled in Switzerland, Italy, France, or Great Britain ; and lastly, the army and the refugees in Macedonia and Corfu. Let us take them in that order.

Serbia has been divided by her conquerors, the lion's share falling to Bulgaria. The lower Morava forms part of the new frontier, which leaves the river in the neighbourhood of Nish and runs north-west of Prishtina and Prizren. Austria-Hungary can put forward no claim to her share except conquest, strategic necessity, the rights of superior civilization, punishment for the alleged Serbian conspiracies, and so forth. But Bulgaria has seized all Serbian Macedonia, the greater part of Old Serbia, and nearly the half of 'Serbia proper', in the name of that very principle of nationality which the Allies have adopted as their battle-cry. Had it been only Macedonia the Bulgarian contention would have had some show of justification. Bulgaria has trumpeted her right to that unhappy district for thirty years. But she has now discovered that the Serbs of the Morava valley are her children and therefore presumably have long cherished the hope of reunion under the Bulgarian crown. How passionate is this 'love' of their Bulgarian 'fatherland' the Serbs showed last spring by their desperate revolt against their new governors. The movement began around Nish, Lescovatz, and Prokuplye in December 1916. The Bulgars thereupon issued a new order interning all the male population over the age of seventeen and conscribing all capable of bearing arms. The Serbs, in fact, were called upon to serve in the army of Bulgaria against their own exiled countrymen. The result was the outbreak of the rebellion at Prokuplye in March. The insurgents, according to the

reports of Bulgarian prisoners, seem to have numbered about 20,000 men, and were armed not only with rifles but also with machine-guns, which speaks well for the organizing powers of their leaders. They even had the assistance of some of the 21st Bulgarian Infantry Regiment, who had mutinied and deserted. Two Bulgarian divisions (including the 1st Sofia) and artillery were sent to deal with the situation. During a fortnight of fighting both sides sustained many casualties ; but when a third division was brought into the field the Serbs were too heavily outnumbered and the insurrection gradually collapsed. It had been a gallant effort, but foredoomed to failure, so long as the Allied armies did not advance from Salonika. Some 6,000 of the insurgents were captured, of whom 2,000 were summarily executed, being shot down in groups with machine-guns and flung into trenches ; the remainder were deported to Asia Minor. After the savage massacres with which the suppression of the rebellion was celebrated, the rural inhabitants of the districts principally affected were removed *en masse* to Bulgaria. There they were divided, the able-bodied men being kept to provide labour, and the remainder handed over to the Turks for deportation to Asia Minor (that sinister phrase). Meanwhile, the conscription for the army of all male Serbs over the age of seventeen was continued.

Of the condition of affairs in Serbia during the last year and a half, in which the rebellion was but a short incident, it is not easy to speak. News has not been plentiful, especially from the Bulgarian part, which is cut off from postal communication even with the Austro-Hungarian districts. A letter cannot cross the lower Morava, except secretly and with great difficulty. Thus my unfortunate friend, the Prota Steitch, who is chaplain at the 36th General

Hospital, has never been able to discover if his wife, whom he left at Kumanovo, is still alive, or whether she has received the many sums of money which he has sent to her through neutral consulates. But the conquerors in their proclamations and their newspapers have given us considerable information about the fate of the Serbian population, and this is supplemented by the reports of those who have escaped and of a few neutral subjects.

It is a fundamental principle of modern warfare that the struggle is carried on between states, and that, therefore, one state cannot hold the subjects of its opponent responsible for their acts, unless those acts are contrary to the rules of war or endanger the safety of the state's administrative or armed forces. Nevertheless the Austro-Hungarian military governor of Serbia, the Archduke Frederick, on June 28, 1916, issued an ordinance announcing the confiscation of the property of all persons held guilty of having assisted in provoking the present war against the Dual Monarchy.[1] The wording of the document is so vague that it would be perfectly possible on the strength of it to pronounce an adverse sentence upon most of the population. Further, by the Hague Convention of October 1907, an invading army is bound to respect private property and to maintain the laws of the country of which it is in occupation. In this case both principles have been violated, for the Serbian constitution expressly forbids the seizure of the means of livelihood of any Serb. The Austro-Hungarian courts also are empowered by this ordinance to try individuals for acts performed before the outbreak of the war and in no way concerned with the safety of the military occupation of Serbia. Thus Colonel Radakovitch, then a prisoner of

[1] *2e Livre bleu serbe*, p. 13, No. 1.

war at Gröding in Austria, was brought up for trial before the military tribunal at Sarajevo on the ground that the Serbian archives captured at Nish proved his complicity in the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Even if the Serbs were the knaves that the Austro-Hungarians make out, they are not such fools as to commit to paper incriminating evidence connecting them with the assassination of a foreign prince. But granted that the story were true and the evidence existed, still the invader has no right thus to arrogate to himself the position of judge in non-military affairs.

With such principles enunciated by the head of the Austro-Hungarian administration, it is not surprising to find a mass of detailed iniquity in the treatment of the conquered people. In violence against persons the Bulgarians appear to have been the great offenders. On their entry into Monastir, says a Greek writer in the *Nea Himera*, they gave orders that all Serbs were to be transported to Sofia. The Bulgars themselves used to smile at the use of the expression 'send to Sofia', and openly said that it meant death.[1] Six hundred women were carried off one day from Monastir in wagons, and their subsequent fate is unknown. At Kumanovo the Bulgars tied together eighty Serbs, killed them with knives, and flung their bodies into the river. They were evidently determined to purge Macedonia of its undoubtedly Serbian element. The rest of the Macedonian male population between the ages of 18 and 50 were either calmly incorporated in the Bulgarian army or registered for military duty in case of necessity.

When Cardinal Mercier was imprisoned in his own palace by the German authorities in Belgium, there was a natural

[1] *2e Livre bleu serbe*, p. 24, No. 12.

and justified outcry in Europe and the revered prelate was set at liberty again. The Serbian bishops are far from Western Europe and have no international Papacy to intervene on their behalf. Thus it is not widely known that the bishop of Nish was carried off in November 1915, and interned near Sofia, or that the bishop of Skoplye was removed to Prizren, his sufferings being embittered by crowds of Bulgars and Albanians who spat on him and tore his beard.

The second Serbian Blue Book contains accounts of many other outrages. A doctor, a neutral subject, gives evidence on the Bulgarian and German violations of women in the district of Skoplye. Another neutral describes how the Austro-Hungarian officers carried off a number of young women of Belgrade to a large house adjoining the Hotel Moscow, violated them, and then passed them on to their soldiers. According to the 'Dnevnik' (of Sofia) the Bulgarian government proceeded to confiscate and sell all 'ownerless' property in the Morava valley. At Belgrade all the furniture was stolen from the royal palace, while houses and shops were for a fortnight unmercifully pillaged by the Germans, whether the owners were present or not. Ironical receipts were sometimes given for requisitions, such as 'King Peter will pay on his return'; 'To the account of M. Nichola Pashitch'; 'To be placed to the credit of Voivoda Putnik'. The Austro-Hungarians are accused of extorting receipts acknowledging payment for articles which they had seized. Houses were turned into stables by the Germans, who did not boggle at using the cathedral at Nish for the same purpose. The *Dnevnik*, *Narodni Prava*, and other Bulgarian newspapers frequently published the news of the arrival at Sofia of train-loads of stolen goods

and the appropriation of the property of refugees who had fled from Serbia.[1] All the harvest for 1916 was confiscated in advance, and severe punishments announced for the evasion of this order. The attacks on property were extended to literature and churches. In their new provinces the Bulgars seized all Serbian books, most of which were either destroyed or forwarded to Sofia to be used as raw material for the manufacture of paper. The National and University Libraries of Belgrade were also appropriated and sent to the Bulgarian capital. There was a lively discussion between the three partners, Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria, as to who should be entitled to rifle the treasures of the famous Serbian monastery of Detchani. A member of the Bulgarian commission appointed for the purpose of stealing literary and artistic treasures finally announced in the *Narodni Prava* of July 31, 1916, that everything of the slightest value had been removed from Detchani to Bulgaria.[2] A few days before the same newspaper had announced that the Bulgarian Exarchate was to replace the Serbian Church in the newly-acquired provinces, despite all Hague Conventions about respect for the religious convictions of the inhabitants of occupied territory. Indeed, already by May nearly three hundred Bulgarian priests had been sent to Serbia to replace the native parochial clergy. A thorough attempt to denationalize the Serbs is being carried out in a number of detailed ways. Serbian names, which end in -itch, are forbidden by the Bulgars, and their owners are ordered to change the termination to -off. The Cyrillic alphabet and the Orthodox calendar have both been suppressed by the Austro-Hungarians, who made first the German and then the

[1] Kuhne, pp. 240–2.

[2] Ibid., p. 279; *2e Livre bleu serbe*, p. 123, No. 165.

Magyar language compulsory in the schools, while the children across the Morava are, of course, being educated entirely as little Bulgars. Peculiarly pathetic is an extract from a report of the inspection of Bulgarian schools at Alexinatz, given in the *Outro* (of Sofia). When the Minister of Education, M. Peshev, ' questioned some of the children about their names and families, they replied in pure Bulgarian. They were only at fault in the accent.'

By introducing German in all the courts of law the Austro-Hungarians have violated the judicial system of the country, as by placing their creatures at the head of the municipal councils they have superseded the local administration. They have also emulated their Bulgarian friends by deporting a large number of Serbian families into Hungary. It goes without saying that the conquerors are exploiting the economic wealth of the country for their own profit, levying taxation and extracting forced loans from the population. The Bulgars have also declared the Serbian paper money worthless and called in all the silver currency at 50 per cent. of its value. The unfortunate people are thus impoverished and disheartened, and the Bulgarian government has acquired a large amount of silver at a low price.

The scattered items of news that have reached the Allies about conditions in Serbia do not on the whole give a picture of unbridled savagery or indiscriminate brutality. The personal behaviour of the conquerors has often been exemplary. Monastir was quite satisfied with the conduct of the German troops, who paid for everything they took during their occupation of the town. The real charge against both Bulgars and Austro-Hungarians is that they have refused to recognize the existence of Serbia as an

independent and sovereign state. The inhabitants have been treated as though they were rebels against the lawful authority of the Dual Monarchy and Tsar Ferdinand. Thus all the rules of civilized warfare safeguarding the material and spiritual welfare of conquered peoples have been swept aside. One incident will illustrate the attitude of our enemies. The Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian Red Cross Societies informed the international bureau of the Society at Geneva that they could not recognize the Serbian Red Cross, because in fact the Serbian state had ceased to exist and had been partitioned between themselves. When the Serbian Red Cross, through Geneva, addressed some questions about prisoners and civilians to the sister Society of Bulgaria, the Bulgars replied that they knew nothing of any Serbian Red Cross and that the inhabitants of Serbia were their own countrymen, of whose interests they themselves would take care.[1] And all the time the Serbian Red Cross, in accordance with international convention, has continued its humane task of collecting information about all prisoners of war in Serbian hands and informing their families of their condition. The meaning of this denial of national rights is that the conquerors have acted in Serbia as though they were the legal civil government of the country, and that the Serbs are subjected to a grinding economic and social tyranny, none the less galling for being orderly and not melodramatic.

Of Serbian prisoners of war in Bulgaria I believe nothing is known, which leads one to suspect that there may be none. In Austria-Hungary good fortune has brought to a few of the prisoners a very easy fate. I have heard of one or two

[1] Kuhne, p. 281. Quotation from *Balkanska Poshta*, of September 20, 1916.

who have been taken into the employment of old friends or relatives in Hungary and who enjoy a very large liberty of movement. But the great majority have naturally been placed in concentration camps. According to a pamphlet [1] issued by the Serbian Ministry of the Interior, the prisoners, both military and civilian, were relieved of all their money, while sums remitted to them from home were placed on deposit, from which they were only allowed to draw small amounts for obvious necessities. Any good clothing they might have had was confiscated for the use of the Austro-Hungarian troops. Peculiarly odious conditions seem to have reigned among the Serbian prisoners at Mauthausen. An Italian, Aristide Sartorio, who returned from that camp, gave the following description of it to the *Giornale d'Italia*. 'The Serbian Golgotha is, perhaps, worse than that of the Serbs who are left in Serbia. As you know, the Serbs were at Mauthausen before the Italians were sent to occupy the barracks—the same barracks in which 8,000 Serbs died of typhus and tuberculosis—so we feared that these epidemics would again appear. All the same, the number of Serbian casualties certainly increased, and the development of diseases was greatly increased by the behaviour of the Austrians inspired by hatred of the Serbs. . . . We had not yet received any parcels from Italy, so we threw them (the Serbs) some money as they passed. Later, even this kind of help was prohibited. And when we came to Mauthausen the Austrians gave us very good coats, and where do you think these coats came from? They had been sent by Serbian ladies to the Austrian command for the use of the Serbs. Many of them had been made in Italy. Colonel Riveri asked us not to wear them, and the greater number of them were

[1] *Nashi u Austro-Ugarskoy.*

handed back to the Austrians, except some which were kept for those who wanted to escape.' [1] The Serbian pamphlet puts the number of deaths from typhus, &c., at Mauthausen at 16,000, and attributes this terrible mortality to the desertion of the sick by the Austro-Hungarian doctors.

The following incident was presumably an attempt to sap the moral of the Serbs. A cemetery was provided for them at Mauthausen with an Orthodox chapel, and on the chapel was placed the inscription, 'Serbian soldiers, died of wounds received in the Austro-Hungarian–Serbian war, which was provoked by Serbia.'

The most disquieting feature of the prisoners' lot is the terrible number who have gone mad. An Austrian doctor told the Serbian government's investigator that in an asylum near Zagreb he had seen over 3,000 Serbian soldiers and interned civilians who had gone out of their minds. No doubt conditions varied in different camps, and the Serbian pamphlet pays a tribute to the commandant at Braunau, but in some centres at any rate the Serbs seem to be undergoing a terrible martyrdom.

A third portion of the Serbian nation consists of all those who have found safety in France or her colonies, in Switzerland, Great Britain, or Italy. The Bulgarian advance into the Vardar valley in October 1915 prevented any migration on a national scale. Those who escaped either made their way to Salonika while there was yet time, or joined the army in the terrible retreat through Albania. The refugees at Salonika consisted largely of minor government officials, schoolmasters, and other educated men with their families, who had settled in Macedonia after the Balkan wars. Their evacuation was a comparatively easy

[1] *The New Europe*, vol. iii, No. 39, p. 414.

task. The others, who had no road open to them but the Albanian mountains, came chiefly from 'Serbia proper' and the plain of Kossovo. Here there was even less of a mass movement, the women fugitives being barely a tenth of the whole body. Numbers of young men went with the army as 'recruits' or in order to avoid internment, many of them students anxious to complete their education in an Allied country. Some hundreds of small boys marched away with their fathers or brothers in the ranks, as well as many isolated individuals both of the educated and peasant class, who had left their homes expecting shortly to return.

The Serbian Relief Fund did invaluable work in facilitating the removal of both contingents of refugees. The colonization of Sicily, Cyprus, or some other Mediterranean island was suggested as provision for the exiles. But eventually the French government offered its hospitality to them all. Some went to Algeria, some to the south of France, but the majority to Corsica. The Serbian Relief Fund offered to meet the financial responsibilities of the settlement in Corsica, but the French government generously undertook the board and lodging of its guests, leaving to the Fund the task of clothing them and providing for their medical care. On the island the Serbs have found scope for their industry and have been able to build up their social life in the midst of strangers.

France has sent many of the Serbian boys to her *lycées*, where they have received the best education that the State affords. Some have gone further afield and are at school in England, where, too, a small number of theological students are being trained for the Serbian priesthood. These youngsters have the future of their nation entrusted to them. While their elders are either dead or forgetting the arts of peace during successive years of active service with the army,

they are called to lay the foundations of that knowledge and character which Serbia will some day sorely need. In the pages of their monthly review, *La Patrie serbe*, a Serbian journalist, M. Bozovitch, describes their duty. After saying that their nation was called to a first mobilization in 1914, and again to a second among the oliveyards of Corfu, he proceeds : 'And to-day we must carry out another, a third mobilization. How, and why ? . . . It is the mobilization of our young students, of the new young Serbia of to-morrow. And that mobilization is made in view of the coming war—the war for progress and civilization : the struggle with ignorance, drink, tuberculosis, disease, and crime ; the war against waste, the poverty of the countryside, against all that is evil in the moral, social, and economic life of a people. For this war, my young friends, you must without truce prepare and arm yourselves. . . . Scattered amongst the schools and universities of the allied nations, you are in countries which possess a glorious past, a civilized present, and a brilliant future. . . . Be ever on the alert. Keep the eye of your mind always open. Let everything around you move you to thought and action. In everything find a subject for comparison with your own country.' [1]

We need not be blind admirers of western European civilization to hope that the younger generation of Serbs will indeed carry back with them to their fatherland moral and technical learning that will help to create real progress in the years to come. Meanwhile, despite the most kindly hospitality that can be offered to them in France or Great Britain, they are exiles. In the first year after the retreat they were buoyed up by the confident expectation that their army and its allies were about to advance triumphantly into

[1] *La Patrie serbe*, No. 3, p. 108.

Serbia. But with the fall of Monastir the army came to a halt. And now month after month has gone by and the restoration of Serbia is still apparently distant. Many of the students have now rejoined their countrymen on active service. For the remainder the long months of waiting and deferred hope must be a searching test of their patriotism and their strength of will.

Lastly, there is the army and the government, and the Serbs in one way or another attached to these. Corfu, where the government installed itself after the retreat, has in certain quarters the aspect of a Serbian town. Serbian officers and soldiers, some sick, some engaged on government work, crowd the streets. In the neighbourhood of the ministries and the hotels one constantly hears Serbian in the streets. There M. Pashitch and his colleagues carry on their task of governing a nation with no territory, except the little strip along the frontier close to Monastir.

The army is now among the mountains between the Tserna and the Moglenitza rivers. With most of our soldiers in Macedonia, knowledge of the Serbs is confined to this last group of the nation. Here they can speak of what they have themselves experienced. Let me try and gather together some of the impressions which our allies have made upon their British comrades.

The first characteristic that strikes a stranger among the Serbs is their geniality. In Western Europe it has been usual to think of the Balkans only as a land of battle, murder, and sudden death. The Serbs were vaguely supposed to be like the Albanians, fierce and savage of aspect, uncouth and alarming. Nothing could be further from the truth. Expansive and jovial, with the simplicity of a light-hearted and primitive people, untroubled by self-consciousness or reserve.

the Serbs are always ready to take us for granted as friends and good companions. There are no two opinions amongst the British troops about the Serbian peasant-soldier. He has the heart of a child with the strength and technical skill of a man—the very qualities of which our pessimists lament the loss in richer and more powerful countries. From the contemplation of him we can understand why Serbia before the war was so often described as a poor man's Paradise. For the Serbs are a family. In their country there were but few outstanding fortunes and no poor. They have had practically no proletariat, for those who guided the nation's destiny took care not to convert the peasantry into an industrial population. Serbia was a country of large villages and 95 per cent. of the land was owned by 300,000 families having each less than 20 hectares. As a veteran politician of Radical views once said, 'Fortunately we have only two coal-mines, no waterfalls, very few factories . . . but plenty of land, enough for years to come.' [1]

There is amongst them an equality which can hardly obtain in our own more complex civilization. After all, the Serbs are all the grandsons or great-grandsons of peasants. They have no titles or hereditary distinctions, apart from the royal family. And King Peter himself is the grandson of a swineherd. This equality is conspicuous in the army, though veiled by a discipline of the very strictest kind. Prompt and exact obedience is given to the orders of an officer. The dignity of the commissioned ranks is severely maintained on duty ; but off duty officers and men are members of a social system that knows no impassable gulfs. If officers occasionally punish their subordinates with a physical violence that we should not tolerate, they will also sit down to table with them

[1] Angell, p. 42.

CORFU. THE KAISER'S VILLA, USED AS A SERBIAN HOSPITAL

on terms of intimacy and without embarrassment on either side. Indeed, the army resembles a mediaeval host, equipped with modern science and modern weapons. The mutual relations of soldier and officer resemble those of the clansman and his chief. There is no thought about equality or inequality. The officer is the leader, the more skilled warrior, whose life is precious and whose will is to be obeyed. The soldier is the follower, whose powers are all at the other's disposal without reserve and without complaint. But it is only so, I imagine, because the soldier's place in the national life is assured—he is an indispensable and free citizen in time of peace, taking his share in the government of his commune. He corresponds to the yeoman of England who followed the chivalry of Edward III or the Black Prince to our wars in France. The personal touch, the underlying equality of men that characterized the Middle Ages, has not been destroyed by the impersonal conditions that have followed industrialization. Hence the paternal non-official attitude of the Serbian officers to their men, as regards both severity and intimacy. Hence also the simple filial devotion of the men to their officers. I remember a Serbian orderly at the 36th General Hospital who insisted on being at his officer's side during the latter's operation, and refused to be ejected, since he felt that he could entrust the patient to no hands but his own. Another Serbian officer, who was severely wounded and had to be transported down the line in great pain, was comforted by a soldier who assured him that he would take as much care of him as of his own calf. In the British army tradition assumes that the private soldier is incapable of looking after himself and must be watched over and guided in a thousand details regarding his health and well-being by his officer, Amongst the Serbs the emphasis seems rather to be placed on

the opposite side. The soldier, being accustomed to the open air and a hard life, is well able to take care of himself and also gladly attends to any needs of his leader. The whole atmosphere is not democratic, as we understand the word to-day. At a meeting in Paris M. Vesnitch, the Serbian Minister in Paris, said, 'Every Serb considers himself a gentleman, which means that he recognizes no human being as socially or legally superior to himself.'[1] This might give rather a false impression, which the speaker did not intend to convey. The equality of the Serbs has nothing in common with the aggressive self-assertion of the modern leveller who considers himself 'as good as' any one else. The Serbian peasant pays an undoubted deference to the social superiority of the educated man, though legally and politically they may be equals. He is a gentleman in the true sense of possessing a profound self-respect and extending courtesy to all as being at least his peers. All are treated as men and not as 'hands' or machines. The whole atmosphere, in fact, is mediaeval. It is made possible by that underlying groundwork of dogma that made the Middle Ages believe and act upon both the fundamental equality of men as sons of God, and their diversity of function and authority.

Another trait in the character of the Serbs appears to be their normally high spirits and facile emotions. The great majority of the troops have heard no word from home since they left their country nearly two years ago. Amidst the hardships of war they cannot solace themselves with thoughts of 'those at home' safe and prosperous and wanting for nothing except their own return. Even if they could get it, leave would have no attractions ; for where would they go ? Their houses may still exist ; their families may indeed

[1] *La Patrie serbe*, No. 4, p. 190.

be unvisited even by want or suffering, but they cannot tell. Meanwhile they are part of an ever-dwindling army with no other certain home than the log-hut or the bivouac-tent which they have erected among the pine-trees and rocks of the mountains. Yet it is always a tonic and an antidote to dullness to be with the Serbs. They possess the irresponsible gaiety that we traditionally connect with the Irish, with whom they have often been compared. Other less convenient sides of the Irish character are also typical of the Serbs, such as a certain cheerful contempt for punctuality in daily life and a ready willingness, arising clearly from politeness and good nature, to make promises that are not always fulfilled. But perhaps the most pronounced of these similarities is to be found in the songs of Serbia and Ireland. With both peoples the historic songs about the past are songs of sorrow, of noble struggles against overwhelming odds, of failure redeemed by unconquerable resolve. There is nothing strange in this combination of laughing gaiety and profound melancholy. It is often only those who are truly capable of the one emotion who also have the faculty for the other. And emotional moderation, stiffness, and reserve are not characteristic of mystical and simple peoples attached to the soil and bound together by bonds of family and tradition.

More virile in appearance than the Greeks and less heavy than the Bulgars, the Serbs are physically the ' thoroughbreds ' of the Balkans. The easy grace and masculine strength of the typical Serbian officer, well set off by the smartness of his uniform, make him an attractive and striking figure in any assembly. They were decidedly the most picturesque feature in the kaleidoscopic crowds of many armies who thronged the quay and the cafés of Salonika in the evenings of last summer. Many are strikingly handsome, tall and lithe, with

that dashing air which has made the Balkans so popular a scene for musical comedies and novels of romance. The soldiers are equally magnificent specimens of humanity. Slim and supple in youth, they develop immense strength in full manhood. The French papers have sometimes affectionately spoken of ' le petit soldat serbe '. But the Serbian soldier is most unlike the little *pioupiou* of Latin armies. He stands well above the average European height, a man of the open air, of the mountains or the farm. It is his clean and strong physique that has made him so unconquerable a fighter. In the Balkan wars various Serbian units performed prodigies of endurance on the march. The 14th regiment, on one occasion, marched 64 kilometres between midday and the next morning in order to arrive on the battlefield and to take part at once in an engagement. A battalion of the third ban, that is to say of men getting on in years, went from Struga to Monastir, a distance of 74 kilometres as the crow flies, in just over twenty-four hours and without a single casualty. The constitutional soundness of the Serbs also makes them excellent patients in hospital, so long as they do not give way to depression. One of our doctors at Vertekop, coming one morning to examine a man on whose interior he had the previous day performed an operation which it was expected would keep the patient in bed for a considerable time, found him walking up and down outside enjoying a cigarette.

The enemy have paid their tribute to the manly qualities of the Serbs. ' Two factors, in my opinion, have been of supreme importance in the victories of the Serbian army,' writes a correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, ' the universal patriotic enthusiasm and the physical soundness of the Serbian soldiers. As to the patriotic enthusiasm, of that

there is the witness of so many models of self-sacrifice, who have given their families and all their possessions and placed themselves at the disposal of their fatherland.'[1] No proof is needed of the patriotism and devotion of an army that has been through what the Serbs have endured. But let me add the following illustration of the spirit that animates the country's women. It must have been a Spartan mother and the daughter of a heroic race who wrote thus to her peasant son, a prisoner in Austria, 'I suppose that if they took you prisoner, it was because you were wounded and not able to defend yourself. But if you surrendered without being wounded, my son, never return home. You would defile the village which has sacrificed on the altar of our Fatherland 83 heroes out of the 120 who were called up. Your brother Milan fell at Rudnik. He must have been happy to see his old king firing a rifle in the front line.'[2]

. . . . . .

The Serbs have the utmost confidence in their ability to emulate the achievements of the most powerful nations of the world. It may be true that, before their recent catastrophe and their terrible losses, some amongst them underestimated the advance which they had still to make in order to become a 'great modern nation'. But, if wider experience and their reduced numbers have made them view the future more soberly, they have in no degree abated their national aspirations. Knowing that, as in the past, they will have for some time after the restoration of peace to rely on the support of their allies, they yet look forward to the day when they will be politically and financially independent. The main lines of the 'Greater Serbia' or 'Yugoslavia' that is to be born of this war have just been laid down in a joint manifesto of the

[1] Quoted in *Yugoslavia*, p. 123. [2] *La Patrie serbe*, No. 5, p. 216.

Serbian Government and the Yugoslav Committee. The programme, which is signed by M. Pashitch and M. Trumbitch, the President of the Southern Slav Committee, contains thirteen clauses and asserts the following aims : [1]

1. The state of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, also known under the name of Southern Slavs or Yugoslavs, will be a free and independent kingdom of united territory and unity of citizenship. It will be a constitutional, democratic, and parliamentary monarchy under the leadership of the Karageorgevitch dynasty, which has shown that it shares the ideas and sentiments of the people and places the nation's freedom and the nation's will before all else.

2. This state will be known as ' The kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes ', and its ruler as ' The king of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes '.

5. All three names, Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, shall enjoy absolutely equal rights in the whole territory of the kingdom, and each may be freely used on all public occasions. . . .

6. Both alphabets, the Cyrillic and the Latin, shall similarly be absolutely equal and either may be freely used in the whole territory of the kingdom. Every central and local authority shall be bound to use either alphabet in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants.

7. All recognized religions shall be freely and publicly exercised. The Pravoslav (Orthodox), Roman Catholic, and Mohammedan creeds, which are numerically strongest amongst our people, shall have the same rights in relation to the state. . . .

8. The calendar shall be unified as soon as possible.

[1] *Pravda* (of Salonika), July 16/29, 1917. The two clauses omitted deal with the national flag, coat of arms, and crown, and permission for the use of special local emblems.

9. The territory of the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes will contain all that territory inhabited by our three-fold people in a compact and continuous body, and cannot be mutilated without injury to the vital interests of the whole. Our people demands nothing belonging to others. It asks for what is its own and desires freedom and unity. . . . Our people puts forward as one indivisible whole the problem of their deliverance from Austria-Hungary and their union with Serbia and Montenegro in one state. . . .

10. In the interests of the freedom and equal rights of all peoples, the Adriatic Sea shall be free and open to all.

11. All citizens throughout the whole territory shall be equal and enjoy the same rights towards the state and before the law.

12. The franchise for the election of deputies to the National Parliament, as for the communes and other administrative assemblies, shall be equal and universal and shall be effected through direct and secret ballot by communes.

13. The constitution, to be drawn up after the conclusion of peace, by a constituent assembly, elected by universal suffrage, will be the basis of the state's life. . . . The nation of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, thus united, would form a state of about 12 million citizens, and prove . . . a powerful bulwark against German aggression and the inseparable ally of all those civilized peoples and states who have upheld the principles of law, national independence, and international justice, as well as a worthy member of a new international federation.

Such is the future for which the Serbs are fighting. The mere restoration of Serbia at the close of the war to her old boundaries would constitute a failure on the part of the Allies. Neither Serbia nor her supporters entered on war intent on

the rearrangement of the map of Europe. But since it was thrust upon them, their object now is so to rectify that map as to remove from Europe that most prolific source of trouble, divided nationalities. British statesmen for some time preserved a discreet silence on the subject of Yugoslav aspirations. But in their reply of January 10 to President Wilson's note the Allies declared themselves to be fighting for 'the liberation of the Italians, as also of the Slavs, Roumanians, and Czecho-Slovaks, from foreign domination'. In his speech in the House of Commons on July 24, Lord Robert Cecil, alluding to the territorial claims of our allies, laid especial emphasis on those of Serbia. The same minister allowed no ambiguity to mar the expression of his sympathy with the Serbian cause at the luncheon given to M. Pashitch on August 8, when he said that the settlement after the war must recognize the national and racial aspirations of the Slavs. On the same occasion Mr. Lloyd George achieved one of his masterpieces of eloquence, summing up our feelings for Serbia with the words, 'Come weal, come woe, we are not merely allies, but friends and partners, and we will go through the world together.' The war has revealed to the British public the hidden problems of South-Eastern Europe. It is to-day clear that the twin causes of Serbian freedom and Yugoslav unity rightly claim our traditional support of the small nationalities, and also are bound up with British interests. A united and self-dependent Southern Slav state would be not only a guarantee of future peace in the Balkans, but also a barrier against German aggression, defending the gateways of the Mediterranean and of the East.

What then are the territories which the Serbs hope to unite in the Yugoslav state? The manifesto of Corfu does not say, and naturally there is some difference of opinion

amongst Serbs. It is possible to meet an occasional extremist who claims Trieste on the ground that the city has a considerable Slav population and would be ruined if separated from its hinterland, which is pure Slovene. I have even heard a Slovene from that neighbourhood put forward a claim to the Yugoslav population across the Italian frontier in Friuli. But such pretensions are most exceptional. Although the *Southern Slav Programme*, published by the Yugoslav Committee, claims Trieste, the great majority of Serbs are more moderate. Without contesting Italy's right to Trieste they content themselves with the eminently reasonable suggestion that the city should become an open port, and so continue to act as the economic outlet of the Slovene, German, and Czech lands to the north. Similarly the Yugoslav kingdom, if in possession of Riyeka, might well make that an open port for the benefit of the great Hungarian plain from which it is the natural exit to the sea. The definite claim to the territories inhabited by Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes we may take roughly to comprise the whole of Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Hertzegovina, Dalmatia, and Croatia-Slavonia, and the Slav portions of Istria, Gorizia, Carinthia, Carniola, Styria, Batchka, and the Banat. All these lands form an ethnical unit, with a population overwhelmingly Yugoslav, from end to end of which the same language is spoken. They make a compact block of territory, the different parts of which cannot be separated without violence to their economic interests.

The next question to be asked is whether the parties who promulgated the manifesto of Corfu are truly representative of the peoples in whose name they speak. There can be no doubt that the Serbian government has only proclaimed what has long been the hope of the Serbian nation, at least ever

since the reign of Prince Michael, fifty years ago. But what of the Yugoslav Committee? Committees of refugees are so apt to consist of irresponsible journalists, intellectual prigs out of touch with their fellow countrymen, cranks, and so forth. Who compose this Committee and what claims has it to represent the Southern Slavs of Austria-Hungary? It is a question well worth examining.

The president is Dr. Trumbitch, President of the Croat National Party in the provincial Parliament of Dalmatia, sometime Mayor of Split, and Member for Zadar in the Austrian Imperial Parliament. He is, that is to say, about as representative of Dalmatian public opinion according to electoral tests as one could wish. The other sixteen gentlemen who form the committee[1] are drawn from all three Yugoslav peoples and all quarters of the Yugoslav territory, with the exception of the Banat and Batchka, which are probably the most unitedly Serbophil of all. Of the four who represent Dalmatia, two are town councillors of Dubrovnik and one of Shebenik. Of the four who represent Croatia, one is the well-known Dr. Hinkovitch, Member of the Croatian Parliament and Croatian delegate to the Parliament of Buda-Pesth. Two of his colleagues share these qualifications to speak for Croatian opinion. On behalf of the three who come from Slovene lands, and of the three who are residents in the United States, it is not possible to bring forward the same argument, though they are clearly men of influence and ability from the positions they hold or held, two being university professors, and three being either presidents or secretaries of Yugoslav organizations. Finally, there is a member of the Bosnian Diet and a Vice-President of the Serb National Union of Bosnia. These men are clearly not

[1] See list in *The Southern Slav Programme*, p. 14.

of the type who represent nobody and put forward views held by few but themselves.

But the views of the Yugoslavs can be examined by another and much more conclusive test, namely the attitude adopted by Austria-Hungary towards her own Southern Slav population from the moment that war broke out with Serbia, and the punishments which she has felt it necessary to inflict on her subjects for sympathy with the enemy. Before the opening of the war Austria-Hungary's accusation against Serbia was that she was intriguing and stirring up trouble amongst the Yugoslavs, the majority of whom were well content to remain under the existing régime. But how did the Dual Monarchy show its confidence in the loyalty of the Yugoslavs? The news of the ultimatum to Serbia was not allowed to become known in Dalmatia till twelve hours after its expiration, and those twelve hours were used to round up the young men and to prevent any attempts at escape from the country. Public opinion was given no opportunity to express itself. All the town councils of Dalmatia were suppressed with the exception of Zadar, where there is an Italian majority. The whole press, as well as all nationalist societies and literary clubs, were suppressed. The Diet, like all the other provincial Diets of Austria, was not allowed to meet.

Elsewhere all the Serbo-Croat leaders were either arrested, and in some cases used as hostages for the good behaviour of the people, or placed under observation. Almost a clean sweep was made of the student class. Dr. Kuhne states that nearly 10,000 persons were thus imprisoned on the eve of, or immediately after, the outbreak of the war. He was also informed by an Austro-Hungarian doctor that in one town of Hungary in the first fortnight of the war ten or twelve Serbs were daily condemned to be shot or hung. The warmth

of the welcome accorded by the population to the Serbian army when it entered Slavonia and Bosnia is attested by the enormous number of persons subsequently punished for treason. The value of Serbian property at Zimun confiscated for high treason amounted, according to the semi-official *Hrvatski Dnevnik* of January 22, 1916, to 550 millions of crowns. As for Bosnia, the *Bosnische Post*, between March 20 and 27, 1915, announced 5,510 cases of confiscation in accordance with a decree of the previous October. Thousands of families—old men, women and children, for the younger men were all with the colours, in prison, or in the Serbian army—were pitilessly evicted from all the Serbian provinces and driven over the frontier into Serbia and Montenegro to embarrass those hard-pressed states. Then followed the trials of large numbers of Serbs of Bosnia on the model of the Zagreb conspiracy case of 1909. We are not concerned with the justice administered, though, after the exposure of previous Austro-Hungarian judicial methods, we may entertain doubts about the prisoners' guilt of the crimes attributed to them. The point is rather the widespread disaffection with which the government felt itself to be contending, and the revolutionary and separatist meaning which the courts found in all the many societies or institutions intended to encourage Yugoslav national feeling. If the most ridiculous charges had to serve as the ground for conviction, if the prosecution could not lay their hands on anything definitely treasonable in the great majority of cases, still the government was right in its estimate of the abhorrence in which it was held by the mass of the people. In three trials in 1915, directed against the youth of Bosnia-Hertzegovina, 131 schoolboys were condemned, one to be hanged and the rest to terms of imprisonment varying from a month to sixteen

years. Then followed the monster trial of Banyaluka in November 1915 when 98 persons were condemned, 16 to death and the remainder to periods of imprisonment varying from two to twenty years and to a collective fine of over fourteen million crowns. The fact that the bench apparently had to be packed with Germans and the prosecution entrusted to Germans leads to the natural conclusion that Croats could not be relied upon to deal severely with the accused. In the trials of students, too, it is noticeable that Roman Catholics (Croats) and Mohammedans figure together with Serbs amongst the prisoners.

Nor have these judicial proceedings been confined to the Serbs of Bosnia-Hertzegovina. The Banyaluka trial was but the most conspicuous of an interminable series of prosecutions to which the population of all the Yugoslav provinces have been subjected. The Croatian and Slovene papers quoted frequent sentences of imprisonment, hard labour, or confiscation of property inflicted by the courts at Zagreb, Trieste, and elsewhere. In the summer of 1916 article 19 of the Hungarian Constitution guaranteeing the equality of the nations in Hungary was suspended. The Croatian Parliament has been permitted to meet, it is true, but several members of the Serbo-Croat block, including the president of the assembly, were interned or underwent sentences of various kinds. When the Yugoslav Committee, in May 1915, issued their appeal to the British nation on behalf of Yugoslav unity and independence, Count Tisza completely failed in his efforts to secure its public repudiation by the Croatian deputies. On the contrary, the vice-president, amid cheers from the whole House, proclaimed ' the nation's constant desire for unification in a single and independent body '.[1]

[1] *The New Europe*, No. 12, p. 362.

The three Croatian opposition parties absolutely refused the invitation to be present at the coronation of the King of Hungary on the ground that 'Hungary is the cruellest oppressor of small nationalities'.

Meanwhile the voice of the Yugoslavs in Austria-Hungary, though it cannot be silenced, grows fainter and fainter. Not only are so many of their leaders imprisoned, outlawed, or with the Serbian army, but their manhood has been terribly reduced. The conscription of the Slavs has been more rigorously enforced than that of the Germans, and of the Yugoslav troops, who were systematically given the most dangerous tasks, 60 per cent. were killed or wounded in the first year of the war.

In this account of Austria-Hungary's treatment of her Yugoslavs my object is not to criticize the government for the measures which it has seen fit to take for the preservation of the Habsburg empire, but simply to point out that the government knows that the great majority of the Yugoslavs pray for the day when they shall escape from their present condition and become united with Serbia in the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. For these three peoples the decisive victory of the Allies will be the only tolerable result of the war. Anything short of that will not release the Yugoslavs of the Dual Monarchy from foreign domination; while nothing else will enable Serbia to regain her lost territories. A peace 'without annexations' has been discussed throughout Europe for the past six months. Whatever annexations the Central Empires might be willing to forgo—and they do not appear to be many—Serbia will not be among them. At all costs Germany is determined to secure the route to the East by Belgrade, Nish, and Pirot. Should our enemies consent to the restoration of Serbia, that would mean a

Serbia shorn of her north-eastern districts as well as of Macedonia, i. e. a microscopic mountain principality dependent utterly on Austria-Hungary. The Central Empires by the destruction of Serbia have supplied the missing link in their chain between the North Sea and Asia Minor. They realize that a strong and independent Serbia is as vital to British security in the East as Belgium is in the West. The Bulgarian official view seems to be even more drastic, and lends no support to those who, even after the events of the last two years, still talk of buying out Bulgaria. It is possible, though improbable, that we might bribe her by offering to secure her possession of the territories to which she lays claim. Such a course would be cheaper than that of continuing to fight her. It is always in the first instance cheaper to sell your friends than to fight your enemies. And Bulgaria could only be bought out by the complete betrayal of Serbia, and for that matter of Roumania as well. Bulgarian ministers have made it abundantly clear that they do not want a settlement of the Balkans on national lines. They insist on a common frontier with the Dual Monarchy and the annihilation of Serbia. The *Narodni Prava* of May 19, 1916, expressed their view: 'The existence of Serbia, no matter under what form, would be a perpetual menace to the peace of the Balkans. . . . This state, which since its independence has been a nest of intrigues and of quarrels, must cease to exist.'

Serbia's hopes, therefore, must rest entirely on the decisive victory of the Allies. But even in that event she will still find difficulties in the way of the full satisfaction of her aspirations. That these difficulties are capable of adjustment is the opinion of many responsible Allied statesmen, as it must be the fervent hope of all who have the principles of the Allies at heart.

The least troublesome questions are concerned with Serbia's allies, Roumania and Montenegro. The Banat has its considerable Roumanian population and is divided by no obvious line suitable for a frontier. But, as in the past, so now, Roumanian and Serbian interests do not clash, and it is in the last degree unlikely that the two friendly states would quarrel over the allocation of a few villages in the Banat when their main attention in each case will be directed to more important issues elsewhere. As for Montenegro, the only source of friction appears to be the dynastic ambition of the old king, Nicholas, who against the wishes of his people and the advice of successive ministries has refused to accept the principle of Montenegro's ultimate absorption in the Southern Slav state under the house of Karageorgevitch.

But the relation of Italy to the Yugoslav question is one of the thorny problems of the Entente's diplomacy. We shall all be agreed on the justice of Italy's ambition to complete her national unity by gathering into the kingdom the population of the Adriatic coast, wherever it is predominantly Italian. Similarly Italy is but reasonable in demanding security for her indefensible eastern coast. But thirdly, it is equally necessary to keep in view the paramount importance of a friendly accord between Italy and the future Yugoslav state. If they are to start their mutual relations on a basis of distrust and antagonism the way will be open for Germany and Austria to profit by the quarrels of our allies and to work their way down once more to the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. As the war proceeds we shall certainly see an Austro-German attempt to erect a Yugoslav state under the Habsburg crown in antagonism to both Italy and Serbia. The union of Italian and Slav must form a barrier through which German force and German intrigue will be unable to break. It is a vital

interest of Italy that a new state should arise to the south of Austria and Hungary strong enough to resist the restoration of the Dual Monarchy to its present control of the Adriatic. And it is equally essential to the Slavs to have beside them a friendly Italy to support their independence against all efforts to reimpose the Habsburg authority.

How then do Italian and Slav claims conflict? There is in Italy a crypto-Austrophil minority who have tried to sow distrust between Serbs and Croats with a view to ruining Yugoslav unity. But we are only concerned with the claims that are put forward by the government and public opinion of Italy on the basis of goodwill towards the Yugoslavs as to all the rest of the Grand Alliance. The difficulty lies in the fact that Italy can put forward a case, based either on nationality or on history, or on strategic grounds, for annexing the whole of the Adriatic littoral from her own frontier down to Corfu. That is an extreme demand which I believe no section of Italian opinion supports. But the principles underlying Italy's claim to various parts of the littoral might be applied to the whole. Now as regards the nationality of the inhabitants, no one will dispute that Trieste is mainly an Italian town. It has not historically been under Italian government, for the house of Habsburg has ruled it for more than 500 years. But to-day the Italians are well over half the population, and, as ever, the city is a centre of Italian culture. The province of Gorizia is sharply divided between the Italians (30 per cent.) to the west and along the coast, and the Slovenes (51 per cent.) to the north and east of Gorizia town. In Istria, too, the separation is sufficiently clearly marked. The west coast is Italian, while the eastern shore and the inland districts are purely Slav, as the most casual tourist can see. Riyeka, I believe, the Italians do not claim.

It is entirely bound up with Croatia and Hungary, for which countries it has long been the only outlet to the sea, and will be for some years after the war the only convenient port of the Yugoslav lands. It is true that the extreme Italian nationalists wish the Yugoslavs to find their commercial outlet through the south of Dalmatia, by Dubrovnik and Kotor (Cattaro), where they can have their ' window on the Adriatic '. But for the purpose of entering or leaving a house a door is a more convenient aperture than a window. In Riyeka the Yugoslavs see the door through which, though under various disabilities, their trade has already gone out to foreign lands. They will not consent to exchange it for a window, the approach to which necessitates the gymnastic feat of scaling the Dinaric Alps.

So far matters are comparatively simple. The coast of the Adriatic from the Isonzo round to the southern point of Istria should be Italian. The hinterland with Riyeka, as rightly, should be Yugoslav. But it is over Dalmatia that controversy still rages. The Italian claim to the province, or half of it, rests primarily on historical arguments, on the ancient Latin character of the coast-land, and in more modern times on the Venetian supremacy over the ports, where the architecture bears witness to the artistic genius of Venice. The reason for the decline of Italian nationality in the last century, so the argument runs, is due to the Austrian policy of trusting the Slavs rather than the Italians, whom the government sought to denationalize. To this the Slavs can reply that the overwhelming mass of the Dalmatian people is Slav and has been so for more than a thousand years. Split was once the capital of the Croatian kingdom, where Zvonomir received his crown from a papal legate. Farther south Dubrovnik maintained its independent Slavonic existence,

defying both Turk and Venetian, till the opening of the nineteenth century. If Venice imposed her government along the coast, her real power was confined to the cities which she used as naval bases for war with the Turks and the protection of her trade. If it is true that Austria encouraged the Slav element at the expense of the Italian, after the loss of Lombardy and Venetia had removed most of the empire's Italian interests, still it cannot be contested that of recent years it has been the Yugoslavs who have borne the burden of official persecution, while the government encouraged the mutual suspicion of the two subject races. When the present war broke out all the Slav municipalities were at once dissolved. The one Italian municipality, that of Zadar, was still left to exercise its powers after Italy joined the Entente. What has happened in Dalmatia is that the small *bourgeois* oligarchies of the towns, which were Italian either in race or feeling, have been ousted from power by the rising tide of the democracy, which is Slav. At no time in the last century have the Italians numbered more than about 5 per cent. of the population. This minuteness of the Italian percentage in Dalmatia is not generally realized. M. Bonavia, writing in *The Near East* in July last, argued that the Austrian statistics had falsified the number of Italians, which should be two-thirds as great again as in the official figures. M. Bonavia did not mention what those figures were, and possibly trusted that English readers would not know. As a matter of fact they place the Italians at 3 per cent. The addition of two-thirds of that would bring their number up to 5 per cent., no very impressive proportion on which to base any ethnical claim to Dalmatia.

Economically there is no comparison between the value of Dalmatia to Italy and Yugoslavia respectively. To Italy it

would be but a narrow strip of barren soil between the sea and the mountain-frontier, as it has been under Austria. To Yugoslavia it would be the natural maritime complement to Bosnia and Serbia. Shebenik and Split, when they become termini of adequate railway-lines piercing the coastal mountains, will become flourishing trade centres, but they can be so only if they are united to the inland provinces in one and the same state.

There is another issue to be considered. Italy's eastern coast lies open to the attacks of any Power whose fleet has the freedom of the Adriatic. When this war has seen the destruction of Austro-Hungarian sea-power, the Italians do not wish to set up another state which may threaten them from the harbours and islands of Dalmatia. If it is argued that the Yugoslavs will be poor and at the outside will not number more than twelve millions, the Italians cautiously reply that it is impossible to predict the future and that Yugoslavia might develop into an aggressive naval Power. Let Italy then assure her safety against such hypothetical dangers by retaining the naval bases necessary for her purpose. Trieste, Pola, and Valona will undoubtedly be hers, if the Allies achieve complete victory. Should she also demand such a strategic advantage as the possession of two or three of the outer Dalmatian islands, the Yugoslavs should give their consent to such an arrangement in the interests of peace. But all who love Italy—and nowhere has she more friends than in Great Britain—will hope that she will yet refrain from laying hands on the mainland or the inner islands. The annexation of part of Dalmatia to Italy would only remove the population of that district from one foreign master to hand them over to another, while it would raise a permanent irredentist agitation

SKOPLYE (USKUB)

amongst the Slavs. Italy's true ideal has been well put by Professor Slavenini: 'The Adriatic . . . ought to be neither a lake more Austrian than Italian as it is now, nor an Italian lake from which the other peoples on its shores would be practically excluded, but a sea on which Italy, secured against every danger, could exercise her activity both economic and civilizing, in full harmony with all the populations of the eastern shore.'[1] If that is the temper that will ultimately prevail in Italy's dealings with the Yugoslavs, we shall see on the Adriatic a union of age and youth, of the ancient yet vigorous Latin civilization and the fresh energy of the Southern Slav. The beloved land from which Western Europe received her laws, her religion, and most of her speech, will take up her age-long task again, not as an imperial conqueror but as a cultured friend, and lead the Serbs into the art and commerce, the science and industry of the modern world, out of which we hope the Serbs will know to refuse the evil and choose the good.

One last question. Is it possible for the Serbs ever to recover from the desolation that has swept over them? Thousands upon thousands of the little nation, of both sexes, have perished. Of their manhood but a pitiful fragment remains at liberty, and of those in bondage the spirit of many may be broken before the hour of release is sounded. It will be difficult no doubt to build up once more the national life. Those war-weary heroes who have been through every vicissitude of fortune, living like ascetics through the long years of uncertainty, triumph, and disaster, will they be able to resume the almost forgotten arts of peace? Those who know the Serbian peasant, who is the backbone of the nation, do not doubt his ability to restore

[1] Hinkovitch, p. 54.

'the years that the locust hath eaten'. And the spirit of the educated class that led the Serbian revival of the decade before the war is not dead. 'He who has snatched his life from death', writes M. Prodanovitch, 'is bound to spend it in labour. For long years Serbia must have no useless men, no squandered days.'[1] That, I believe, will be the spirit of the Serb. If ever a nation bought its union and its liberty with blood and tears, the Serbs have paid that price. For five hundred years they have never been content to submit to slavery, but have unceasingly struggled towards the light. To extend to them our pity would be an insult. They have kept faith with us to the utmost and accepted the loss of all as better than surrender. Let us rather ask ourselves how it was that they came to be abandoned to their fate, and resolve that never now for lack of Great Britain's sympathy and help shall they fail in the achievement of their national liberty.

[1] *La Patrie serbe*, No. 3, p. 102.

APPENDIX

STATISTICAL TABLE OF VARIOUS RECKONINGS OF THE MACEDONIAN POPULATION[1]

Abridged from the Table in Cvijic's (Tsvijitch) *Promatranya o etnografiyi Makedonskih Slovena.* Belgrade, 1906.

	Greek Views.			*Bulgarian Views.*				*Serbian Views.*			*German Views.*		
	Greek Sílogos 1903.	*C. Nicolaides* 1899.	*Delyani* 1904.	*Brankov* 1905.	*Zolotovitz* 1905.	*Makedonski pregled* 1905.	*Kenchov* 1900.	*Gopchevitch.*	*Veselinovitch* 1886.	*Ivanitch*[2] 1906.	*Peucker.*	*Gersin* 1903.	*Ostreich* 1905.
Macedonian Slavs . .	—	454,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,215,000	1,182,036	1,500,00
Serbs . .	—	—	—	—	150,000	—	400	1,540,500	1,800,000	(501,656)	—	—	—
Bulgars .	374,000	—	332,162	1,172,136	1,100,000	1,172,136	1,037,233	—	—	—	—	—	—
Greeks . .	659,000	656,300	652,795	190,047	270,000	190,047	214,329	201,140	(800,000)[3]	(5,200)	240,000	228,702	200,00
Mussulmans[4]	777,000	576,600	634,017	840,433	1,100,000	830,811	610,365	397,020	—	(250,000)	1,165,000	627,915	550,00

[1] The figures in each case are for the three vilayets, or Turkish provinces, of Kossovo, Monastir, and Salonika. I have omitted the figure for the smaller races, Vlachs, Jews, and Gipsies.

[2] Only for the vilayet of Kossovo.

[3] Greeks, Turks, Albanians, Jews, &c.

[4] Tsvijitch also gives a Turkish view—that of Verdène, 1905—which, however, deals with the four vilayets of Kossovo, Monastir, Scutari and Yannina. Verdène reckons 800,000 Slavs, 500,000 Greeks, 900,000 Turks, 2,600,000 Albanians, 520,000 Vlachs, and details of smaller races.

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